



Kensington & Chelsea NEWS

LWN

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RECORD WIN FOR THE PEOPLE'S CHAMPION

NEW TORY MP VOWS TO FIGHT FOR POOR AND NEEDY

ELECTION winner Victoria Borwick has become the most popular MP for Kensington in more than 40 years – and she has pledged to now be an all-people's champion with a new girl-next-door policy to fight for the poor and needy.

Mrs Borwick (pictured), wife of House of Lords hereditary peer Jamie Borwick, has started her new career as a member of Parliament by dropping the use of her 'Lady' title and is telling residents, "please call me Victoria".

Her local girl approach sent such a refreshing wind of change through the constituency that it swept her to Westminster on the largest vote for any MP for Kensington since 1974.

By LWN reporter
GEOFF BAKER



Residents so immediately warmed to the former Deputy Mayor of London, who has spent the past five weeks getting out onto the streets to canvass at 7.0 am every day, that they sent her to Parliament with a much bigger backing than for any of her all-male predecessors.

The Conservative candidate faced an uphill struggle to win the seat as she replaced Sir Malcolm Rifkind, who resigned after the "cash for access" scandal and who was criticised for holding his surgeries in the House of Commons.

But her open, everyday style and promise to hold regular local surgeries so won the hearts and minds of the electorate that she got more votes than Sir Malcolm and all other Kensington MPs before him.

With 18,199 votes, Victoria Borwick won 53.3% of the total, a 2.2% improvement on Sir Malcolm's 17,595 votes in the general election of 2010. His predecessor, Dudley Fishburn, won 15,550 votes in 1992 and before Mr Fishburn, Sir Brandon Rhys Williams had 15,562 votes in the election of 1974.

Victoria Borwick's closest rival last week, Labour candidate Rod Abouharb, had 10,838 votes. The Lib Dems' Robin McGhee was hammered with just 1,962 of the votes – a massive drop from the 6,872 votes that the Lib Dems won in 2010. The Green Party's Robina Rose got only 1,765 votes and UKIP's Jack Bovill

■ TURN TO PAGE 3

INSIDE THE ROYAL BOROUGH'S FREE WEEKLY



A Queen among
gardeners - page 13

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HEROES' RECEPTION FOR WAR VETERANS



■ SECOND World War veterans were given a heroes' reception when they took part in Sunday's VE Day commemorative march through London – not least the Chelsea Pensioners from the Royal Hospital.

See full story and photo feature on pages 6, 7 & 8

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THE paper serving the HEART of London

Blueprint aims to unlock growth and reduce traffic congestion

Bold vision for London's roads network

THE Mayor of London has revealed further details of plans to deliver his bold vision for the future of London's road network, aimed at reducing congestion, creating new public spaces and encouraging more people to walk and cycle.

The Mayor, who has visited Boston as part of a trade mission to build economic and cultural ties with key cities in the United States, unveiled proposals to redesign a number of key road networks in the capital in order to unlock growth and make the capital a more attractive place to live and work.

The news comes after the Mayor visited the Central Artery-Tunnel Project, also known as the Big Dig, which is recognised as the largest and most complex highway project undertaken in the US. It replaced Boston's deteriorating six-lane elevated Central Artery with an eight lane state-of-the-art underground highway. This resulted in significantly reduced traffic congestion and led to substantial regeneration on the surface and surrounding areas.

The Mayor and TfL have considered more than 70 locations across the capital where the introduction of tunnels, fly-unders and decking could deliver benefits that are in line with the Mayor's 2050



FROM THE
MAYOR'S
OFFICE

Infrastructure Plan and the recommendations of the Roads Task Force.

Now the Mayor has unveiled five locations which have subsequently been identified as being suitable for further feasibility work by TfL:

■ A mini tunnel at the A13 in Barking Riverside – By creating a new tunnel for the A13, a huge amount of land could potentially be opened up for future development whilst reconnecting the Borough of Barking with the new Barking Riverside development, which is the location for just under 11,000 new homes,

■ Decking of the A3 in Tolworth – By decking over the A3, severance would be reduced and the area adjacent to the proposed Crossrail 2 station would be connected with the rest of the Borough, providing additional land for new homes.

■ A fly-under at the A316 at Chalkers Corner – A small flyunder would reduce severance and radically improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians and remove a major pinch point for traffic along the A316.

■ A fly-under at the A4 in Hammersmith – by replacing the existing viaduct with a new tunnel, the town centre would be reconnected with the River Thames, creating new opportunities for development and open space.

■ Decking or a mini-tunnel at the A406 in New Southgate – by building over this junction on the North Circular, land would be unlocked for new homes and connect the area around the proposed Crossrail 2 station.

London's current Inner Ring Road is facing increasing pressure for change. As he previously set out in the 2050 Infrastructure Plan, the Mayor believes that a replacement ring road, in the form of an inner orbital tunnel or two cross city tunnels, could enable more efficient and reliable vehicle movement. It would also reduce congestion in central London by up to 20 per cent and free up space on the surface which could support the creation of 170,000 additional jobs.

Boris Johnson, said: "Rebuilding some of our complex and aging road network underneath our city would not only provide additional capacity for

traffic, but it would also unlock surface space and reduce the impact of noise and pollution. I am inspired by what the ambitious people of Boston have achieved here at the Big Dig, both in terms of reducing congestion and how they have dramatically improved the quality of life on the surface. In London we face similar challenges on our roads, but this could also be a fantastic opportunity to better shape our city and support economic growth."

London is a rapidly growing city with a population expected to reach 10 million by the early 2030s and nearly 11.5 million by 2050. With 24 million journeys already being made by people and freight on the capital's roads every day, radical steps are going to be needed to tackle growing congestion in the future.

Funding for such schemes would require new and innovative approaches that enable the positive benefits of each scheme to be captured, including the value generated from new development sites in these areas. TfL will now work with local boroughs to progress these proposals further, including working up more detailed costs and possible funding options and an indicative programme of delivery if funding can be secured. This further analysis will be presented to the Mayor later this month.



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'Let's focus on a positive future'

■ FROM PAGE ONE

1,557.

"I am honoured and delighted to have been elected," said Mrs Borwick. "I would like to thank the people of Kensington, who have put their trust in me, the local girl who grew up in these streets, and I can assure you that I will work hard to represent all my constituents."

"I shall be holding regular local surgeries and ward forums with local councillors to make sure that we listen to local residents."

"I intend to represent all of those who live in the borough and continue with the good initiatives we've already started - particularly the work with troubled families."

"Kensington is not just home to the rich and fa-

mous. I live here and grew up here. I know there's a lot of people here who need help. I will make sure they get everything they need."

"I will become a good constituency MP and represent the concerns of the people of Kensington. The key areas are the best health provision, excellent schools and housing."

She paid tribute to the members of Team Borwick who have been energetically knocking on doors since the electioneering began and echoed the relief of residents that Labour's feared Mansion Tax policy was beaten off by the Conservatives' spectacular and unexpected victory.

Clear endorsement

"Getting elected is a team effort and we had hundreds of volunteers who turned out to help. It is always difficult as the newcomer and it is now important to best represent the people of Kensington in Parliament," she said.

"This election result is a clear endorsement of the

Conservative plan to get the economy back on track. We have made huge progress in the past five years with record levels of growth, unemployment down, and our deficit halved."

"A strong economy is vital for London to allow businesses to grow and flourish, for employment to keep on rising and for our vital services to be supported."

"The result was also a clear condemnation of the socialist politics of envy such as the Mansion Tax. The Mansion Tax would have had a devastating effect on the families in Kensington, many of whom bought their houses many years ago, out of taxed income."

We can now focus on a positive future for the country and a positive future for Kensington. That's what I as MP for Kensington will work to achieve - I'm a seven-day-a-week worker and I'm going to make sure I am here for the people as much as possible."

No change in political map of central and west London

CENTRAL London MPs Greg Hands and Karen Buck took to Twitter to thank electors in 140 characters for their re-election, but newcomer Victoria Borwick, Kensington's first woman MP in at least 40 years, said it in an "old-fashioned" letter.

Fellow central London MP Mark Field (Conservative, **Cities of London and Westminster**) appears to have said nothing publicly for his re-electors at all.

Mr Field, who was heavily criticised by residents during the election because he will only see constituents in his office at the House of Commons and not at local surgeries, made no mention of his win on his website, nor in any discoverable press statement, nor even on Twitter. Greg Hands returns to Westminster representing **Chelsea and Fulham** on the wave of 25,322 votes, or 62.95 per cent of the total vote. Chelsea and Fulham is a safe Conservative seat, but he can be pleased that in 2015 his vote was slightly up on the previous General Election in May 2010, when he gained 24,093 votes.

After his win was announced, he tweeted: "It is an honour and a privilege to be re-elected MP for Chelsea & Fulham again, and with more votes and an increased share of the vote!"

After re-winning **Westminster North** for Labour, Karen Buck also Tweeted: "It's a huge honour to have been re-elected after a closely fought campaign. Many thanks to voters, volunteers, organisers and family".

But Victoria Borwick, the longtime Kensington and Chelsea borough councillor, former Deputy Mayor of London and now **Kensington's** first woman MP in generations, sent a personal letter of thanks and commitment to her supporters through this newspaper.

She said: "I am honoured and delighted to have been elected as the Member of Parliament for the Kensington Constituency. I would like to thank the people of Kensington, who have put their trust in me, the local girl, who grew up in these streets, and I can assure you that I will work hard to represent all my constituents."

"Getting elected is a team effort and we had hundreds of volunteers who turned out to help. It is always difficult as the newcomer and it is now important to represent the people of Kensington in parliament. I shall be holding regular local surgeries and ward forums with local councillors to make sure that we listen

THE ELECTION

By Geoff Baker

to local residents. This election result is a clear endorsement of the Conservative plan to get the economy back on track. We have made huge progress in the past five years with record levels of growth, unemployment down, and our deficit halved. A strong economy is vital for London to allow businesses to grow and flourish, for employment to keep on rising and for our vital services to be supported.

"The result was also a clear condemnation of the socialist politics of envy such as the Mansion Tax. Mansion Tax would have had a devastating effect on the families in Kensington, many of whom bought their houses many years ago, out of taxed income."

Aside from Victoria Borwick entering Parliament for the first time, the election results in Kensington, Chelsea and Westminster added up to "no change whatsoever" as each party kept the seats.

Mark Field, the reigning MP for the **Cities of London & Westminster**, kept his seat with 19,570 votes; taking 54.1% of the vote and improving his popularity by 1.9%, beating his nearest rival, Labour candidate Nik Slingsby, who won 9,899 votes. The Lib Dem candidate Belinda Brooks-Gordon took 2,521 votes, down 13.5% on the 2010 election. Green Party candidate Hugh Small won 1,953 votes. UKIP's Robert Stephenson won 1,894 votes. The Cannabis Is Safer Than Alcohol candidate Edouard-Henri Desforges won 160 votes, marginally better than Jill McLachlan, who managed only 129 for her Christian People's Alliance candidacy. Class War candidate Adam Clifford won 59 votes.

Westminster North was won again by Labour candidate Karen Buck, with 18,504 votes, a 46.8 per cent share and upping her popularity by 2.5 per cent. The closest contender, Conservative Lindsey Hall, won 16,527 votes. UKIP's Nigel Sussman came third with 1,489 votes. Kirsty Allan for the Lib Dems was beaten off into fourth place, with just 1,457 votes and down 10.2% on the Lib Dem vote in the last election. The Green's Jennifer Nadel won 1,322 votes, Gabriela Fajardo won 152 votes for the Christian Party and independent Nicholas Ward took only 63.

In **Chelsea and Fulham**, the Conservative candidate Greg Hands retained his seat in Westminster with 23,322 votes; a 62.9 per cent share and an improvement of 2.5 per cent. The Labour candidate Alexandra Sanderson won 9,300 votes. Liberal Democrat reflected his Party's huge swing to unpopularity with 2,091 votes, down 11 per cent on the Lib Dem vote in 2010. UKIP's Adrian Noble was close behind with 2,039 votes and the Green Party's Guy Rubin won 1,474 votes.

In **Kensington**, popular newcomer Victoria Borwick retained the seat for the Conservatives, which was previously held by the disgraced Tory Sir Malcolm Rifkind - who was forced to resign after the "cash for access" scandal. She took 18,199 votes, a 52.3 per cent share and an improved rating of 2.2 per cent.

The Labour candidate Rod Abouharb improved his party's popularity in Kensington by 5.6 per cent with 10,838 votes. Lib Dem Robin McGhee took his party's popularity down by 13.9 per cent, with just 1,962 votes, but ahead of Robina Rose, who won 1,765 votes for the Green Party. UKIP's Jack Bovill came fifth with 1,557 votes, faring more than seven times better than the 211 votes won by Tony Auguste for the Cannabis Is Safer Than Alcohol party. Andrew Knight won 158 votes for his Animal Welfare Party, ahead of the 115 votes for the Alliance for Green Socialism candidate Toby Abse. Roland Courtenay won 23 votes as the New Independent Centralist party.

Chelsea primary school goes to top of the class

PUPILS and staff at Ashburnham Community School in Chelsea are celebrating after education watchdog Ofsted recognised it as an outstanding school.

Last month Ofsted inspected the school and praised the progress that all pupils make, their outstanding behaviour and the 'buzzing, hardworking atmosphere'. Located on the World's End Estate in Chelsea, the school has over twice the national average proportion of disadvantaged pupils.

Over three quarters are from ethnic minority backgrounds, a large majority of whom speak English as a second language. Ofsted highlighted that 'pupils from all backgrounds make outstanding progress', and were impressed at 'the rich range of subjects in the school,

and the additional activities and experiences ... helping to ensure pupils have an excellent understanding of the world they live in."

"The outstanding measure comes after an Ofsted inspection two years ago said the school required improvement. Changes in the leadership, teaching staff and governing body, a federation with Fox Primary in Notting Hill (already an outstanding school), and support from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea all helped lay the foundations for the transformation."

"Most credit goes to the staff and pupils, who have worked incredibly hard over the last two years," said Associate Headteacher, Bella Street. "This is a school we are all incredibly proud of, and to have

that recognised officially is wonderful. The cheer that the pupils gave when we told them was deafening."

"Over the last two years we have been lucky enough to have visits from the Prime Minister, Princess Anne and David Walliams, but this beats them all!"

Councillor Emma Will, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's Cabinet Member for Education, said: "This is wonderful news for the children and parents at Ashburnham Community School. This kind of report can only be achieved by the hard work of a talented and dedicated school staff. I would like to thank all the teachers and support staff for their efforts which clearly impressed the inspectors."



Escape for amazing food in granny's 'cosy living room' near Buckingham Palace

CAFÉ Bella Maria is an independent, Italian and English family run café and catering business in the heart of busy Victoria, right next door to Buckingham Palace.

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Café Bella Maria also provides catering for working lunches, parties and events, as well as venue hire so have a look at our catering menu and get in touch!

Café Bella Maria enjoys a high rating of Trip Advisor with a recent posting saying "great food and great service at excellent prices".



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Out of Africa – into a luxury London home

FIRST the Americans, then the Russians and Chinese, now rich Africans are heading for Kensington and Chelsea to set up luxury homes.

A CNN report has revealed that new money from the African continent is the latest big foreign investment in the borough.

Buyers from Nigeria, Ghana, Congo, Gabon, Cameroon and Senegal are the new investors in homes in Kensington & Chelsea, says CNN.

Nigerians are said to be spending the most, typically spending between £14 million and £24 million on a property, according to luxury estate agents Beauchamp

Estates. Their research shows that over the past three years Africans have spent over £588 million on luxury homes in the capital.

“The Africans who are coming into London now are Africans who themselves have worked for their money,” Bimpe Nkontchou, a London-based British-Nigerian wealth manager told the broadcaster.

“They have grown in industry and are actually part of the exciting story of the African renaissance. It’s bringing to London the best of the continent. The new international African is very well-travelled – educated in the U.S.,

UK and different parts of Europe, their taste is definitely more modern.”

Beauchamp Estate director Gary Hershman told CNN: “It is going to be the African century.”

He added: “Virtually all the transactions are for end use, not rental investment, which indicates that the African buyer market in London has significant room for growth.”

“African buyers or luxury tenants in London are currently where the Russians and Ukrainians were five years ago. They have the resources and desire to purchase or rental luxury homes in Prime Central London.”

Sound idea to bolster charity funds

NORTH Kensington’s acclaimed Clement James Centre, voted Best Small Charity of the Year, is to hold a barbershop concert this week to raise funds for its work with communities in one of the most deprived areas of the UK.

The concert, with groups The Close Shaves and The High Heels, will be held on Wednesday [May 13] at the centre at 95 Sirdar Road, W11 4EQ, at 6.45 pm.

The programme will include a barbershop and close harmony songs, both secular and sacred

and ranging from Henry VIII, Tallis, Mozart, and Rachmaninov, through to songs by Cole Porter, The Everly Brothers, Abba and the Beatles.

All proceeds from the concert will go to the charity that empowers the community to release its potential through education and employment. Tickets, to include drinks and canapés, cost £30 and are available by email to reception@clementjames.org or on 0207 221 8810.

The ClementJames Centre’s

work focuses on three areas:

■ Into university – by providing study support and facilities, helping children enter university and tertiary education where no-one previously in their family has done before.

■ Into work – by mentoring, training and coaching, helping the long-term unemployed get back to work;

■ Communicate – providing training in English as a foreign language: a basic stepping stone to progress in the community.



NEWS FROM NICK ...

with Nicholas Paget-Brown, Leader of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Important we pay tribute to unsung heroes of polling day

THIS is the first time I’ve written this column in the middle of the night, with my shoes off and about two pints of caffeine pumped into my bloodstream. But then again, General Election night doesn’t come round every year.

As I sit somewhat hunched over my keyboard it’s a good time to reflect on what’s just happened.

This is democracy in action – the people making their voice heard, selecting who they want to represent them in the House of Commons and deciding what policies they think should be implemented.

With the last Kensington constituency vote counted and the speeches finally over I would like to pay my respects to all those who stood for election.

We are fortunate in this country that people with sometimes very different views can go head-to-head in an attempt to win voters over but do so, more often than not, in a respectful manner.

And of course I want to congratulate the victors – here in Kensington we have returned one of our own councillors, Victoria Borwick, who will now make her way to Parliament along with Greg Hands, who returns to the Westminster fray to represent the people of Chelsea and Fulham.

We will also be welcoming a new face in the Council Chamber: Kim Taylor-Smith, who has just been elected to represent Stanley ward, will be taking up the baton from Sir Merrick Cockell.

Of course while the politicians have dominated the screen, airwaves and newspaper pages throughout the campaign, and it did feel like a very long one indeed, beaver away in the background, here in Kensington and Chelsea and right across the United

Kingdom has been a veritable army of council staff determined to make the machinery of the election run smoothly. For them too it’s been a long slog.

A new system to get on to the electoral register has had to be accommodated. Previously, one person in every household was responsible for registering everyone else who lives at that address, but this has changed and now each person is required to register to vote individually, rather than by household – so there was lots more to be done before the voting cards could be sent out.

Then there’s election day itself. From 6am 220 members of staff were on duty in the polling stations, which remained open until 10pm, after which the paperwork had to be checked and the ballot boxes delivered back to the Town Hall.

There, a further 150 council officers were waiting to receive them and begin the task of counting through the night and into the small hours, all under the intense scrutiny of hopeful candidates and their agents.

So as the polling station signs come down and the ballot boxes go back into storage I’d like to thank all those

who oversaw the voting process and counted the votes – they are the oil in the wheels of the democratic process.

We will learn more in the hours ahead about the colour and shape of our new Government but that colour looks increasingly like it will be blue. Certainly, by the time you read this, the complexion of the new administration will have been settled.

I for one wish our new government every success. They have a big agenda to tackle, and so, in our own way, do we on the council.

Now the election is over it’s time for us to get back to that agenda; I hope to be telling you all about it in future editions of the *London Weekly News*.

This is democracy in action – the people making their voice heard



CHRIS IS RACING TO BEAT PARKINSON'S

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THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF
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To contact the Leader of the Council, Cllr Nick Paget-Brown, email theleader@rbkc.gov.uk

Homes to rocket in price after Tory election victory

● CITY PROPERTY VALUES MAY RISE BY 20%

THE shock Conservative election victory is to make Lottery-like millionaires of hundreds of ordinary home owners in Westminster.

Property experts say the unexpected result will cause homes in the borough currently worth £2 million to DOUBLE in the next five years.

By the time David Cameron's new administration has finished its new term owners of even modest-sized homes will be rolling in big money.

Estate agents are predicting that the price of Westminster homes will shoot up by 20 per cent in the next year now that fears of Labour's threatened Mansion Tax have been quashed.

With the deterrent of the Mansion Tax removed, demand for homes in Westminster is to soar.

"In the short term, the next 12 months, we expect residential assets above £2 million to rally by up to 20 per cent," predicted Ed Mead of estate agents Douglas & Gordon.

"The General Election result will restore overseas investor confidence in the UK and UK real estate assets, leading to a surge in capital values over the next five years.

"Accordingly we expect the following, over the

● By LWN reporter
GEOFF BAKER

short and long term: an immediate second half of 2015 rally in all London real estate residential assets and in the £2 million + market, especially in Prime London, to rise 20 per cent over the next 12 months and to double within five years".

According to properties listed on Right Move, £2 million is the current worth of a two-bedroom flat in Victoria.

Right Move says in the last year ordinary terraced homes in Westminster sold for an average price of £3,336,525, while semi-detached homes fetched £4,558,824.

Owners of Westminster semis who are approaching retirement in 2020 are sitting in a goldmine; in five years they could sell up to the tune of £9 million and retire to the country or seaside with a massive nest egg.

A three-bedroom semi in Christchurch, Dorset, will currently cost £550,500. Even allowing for an unlikely doubling of prices by 2020 in the West-country too, Westminster retirees could swap

homes for a comparable house "in the sticks" and bank up to £8 million.

With Westminster homes rocketing in price way beyond the pockets of first-time buyers, the new Conservative Government has pledged to launch a blitz of building in the capital.

"We will build 200,000 quality UK Starter Homes over the course of the next Parliament, reserved for first-time buyers under 40 and sold at 20 per cent below the market price," the Conservatives promised in their manifesto.

"We have delivered over 217,000 new affordable homes since 2010. We will now go further, delivering 275,000 additional affordable homes by 2020. And we will offer 10,000 new homes to rent at below market rates, to help people save for a deposit.

"We will ensure that brownfield land is used as much as possible for new development. We will require local authorities to have a register of what is available, and ensure that 90 per cent of suitable brownfield sites have planning permission for housing by 2020.

"To meet the capital's housing needs, we will create a new London Land Commission, with a mandate to identify and release all surplus brown-

field land owned by the public sector. We will fund Housing Zones to transform brownfield sites into new housing, which will create 95,000 new homes."



■ DAVID CAMERON speaking outside No 10 after the Tory election victory

Soldier in fight for film funding

RETURNING home after witnessing the horrors of war, ex-serviceman Johnny Killigrew tries to rebuild his life with his wife and son - it's a tough job.

But suffering from post traumatic stress disorder, (PTSD) he must confront the demons in his head before he can feel safe again.

This is the all-true and common situation facing soldiers returning from conflict and is the subject matter of Westminster-based actor Dan Poole's latest film - The Loneliest Time.

It's also a chance for budding Steven Spielbergs to get involved and help produce the short film that will see their contribution of as little as £10 get a credit on the film that will be shot almost entirely in Westminster.

Mr Poole, 41, from Wilton Road, Victoria, explains why this film, directed by Cort Kristensen, is so important and needs to be made.

"The story comes from a lot of ex-servicemen and women I know," he said. "Those who served the first gulf war and other conflicts.

"I remember when I was 18, a marine friend went to the first gulf war and it totally messed up his mind. It doesn't happen to everyone but it did to him. I remember some letters he wrote and they were quite cogent then suddenly there would be a weird section which read as if someone else had taken control of him. I was kind of horrified. I've talked to servicemen of the affects conflict have on people. Some are truly adversely affected by it and this short film is a combination of those stories.

"It is about PTSD but it's bringing the subject matter to a point where it can be discussed. People can see what it is, the film will give them the tools to see it for themselves."

Mr Poole (pictured), who wrote and starred along with fellow actor Giles Terera in the award-winning documentary Muse of Fire, explains his crowd-funding Kickstarter initiative to get the £7,500 needed to get the project made

"The short will be about 12-15 minutes long," he said.

"It's a film in its own right, entertaining and dramatic. I have made a lot of British military training films where they have wanted a lot of dry films made at great expense to provide support and education to servicemen and women.

"This film will be produced to the highest standards, where I can take it to service charities like Help The Heroes and others like the Big White Wall. I'll give it to them for free for them to share.

"The soldier in the film has to deal with his rage. He is married with a child. It about a conflict in his emotions which pushes him away from them despite his attempt to bring them closer.

"These things happen and the film is based on actual events - it's dark.

"If this subject matter was made to a big studio level, they tend to lose their honesty, and become more sanitised or just become drama, where the truth is knocked out of them."

So how do people get involved in its production?

"The deadline for online investors to get involved is Friday, May 22 at 8.09pm.

"If people invest in the film, from £1, they will get a sliding scale of goodies depending on their contribution.

"A £10 pledge will get them a special thanks on the film credit, plus updates from us, plus a high definition downloadable copy of the film.

Mr Poole adds: "The film will be filmed almost entirely in Westminster. All the pos-production work will be done at Prime Focus in Soho. We are shooting in Park Plaza Hotel at Westminster Bridge. We have fabulous locations and I've managed to negotiate ridiculous low fees. The film will look like a £50k shoot."

www.kickstarter.com/projects/1623145516/the-loneliest-time-a-short-film-about-conflict?ref=nav_search

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Paying tribute with the grateful thanks of a nation

THEY must have wondered why they had even bothered, those brave, dignified veterans of the war against tyranny who were saluted on Sunday in a

city whose war memorial had been daubed with hate the day before on a march by Leftist post-election protestors.

If they did, the old soldiers did not show it. If the appalling desecration of the monument to the

**Words by Geoff Baker
Photos by Richard Austin**

Women of World War II was the thanks they got for saving us from Hitler, these, the grey, aged and much-respected comrades of the 383,000 British Servicemen and women who died so that all people would have the right to vote - and protest - weren't going to show their contempt; for had seen much worse than a bunch of deluded activists throwing their toys out of their prams.

When the veterans in wheelchairs and on walking sticks who drew London's heartfelt salute at the VE march on Sunday were of the same age as many of the anti-Government demonstrators who shamed the Left Wing on Saturday, they were fighting for their lives, seeing friends shot dead right next to them.

Men who have seen the horror of battle were not going to be daunted by ill-judged graffiti on a statue, the threat of an aerosol is not quite up there with a bullet.

Besides, there was a far greater importance on Sunday than to pay attention to the rantings of hundreds of young fools whose idea of being hard was to spend Saturday shouting "get the Tories out" at Downing Street - the veterans who were honoured by the nation were the truly tough, the many medals on their chests were testament to that.

Pipers to the front of them, bands to the rear, flanked on all sides by flag-waving children, saluted by a flypast in the skies above and with the bells of Westminster Abbey ringing behind them, the veterans were done proud by a grateful London.

As ever, it was the peerless dignity of The Queen that set the better example of the best of Britain, solemnly remembering at the foot of the grave of the Unknown Warrior in the Abbey where later in the service a young sea cadet proclaimed "let us give thanks for the selfless sacrifice", and an as-young army rookie pointedly added "for the many blessings we enjoy as a result".

A huge wave of pride swept over Westminster as these, the 1,000 marchers of the greatest generation, entered Lifeguards' sandy square to rousing cheers from a packed crowd and to be respectfully saluted by Prince Charles and Prime Minister David Cameron.

Ten years ago, Prince Charles had told them "you have been the bedrock of this country, we salute you with all our hearts".

There was no need for him to repeat those apt words now, the gratitude was tangibly in the air as Guardsmen stood in firm attention to honour the

Chelsea Pensioners, the old Paratroopers, the WAAFS, the merchant seamen and all of the other aged heroes who long ago fought so that Britain would be free.

But one more march remains yet.

For although VE Day marked the end of the fight in Europe against the greatest evil that this world has ever known, the war did not end with it. In May of 1945, the fighting continued in the Far East as the Allies battled against a Japanese enemy no less arrogant, brutal and inhumane than Nazi Germany.

As Europe celebrated 70 years ago, in the East brave men battled on at sea, in the air and in the dreadful conditions of the jungle.

But on Saturday August 15th - VJ Day 70 - veterans of the Forgotten Army will march on a spectacular day that the Government and British Legion are now organising to ensure that no hero will ever be forgotten again.

Only then, on the 70th anniversary proper of the end of the worst war in human history, will London and the nation deliver the final salute to the hundreds of thousands of its men and women who lost their lives for our democracy.

As a glorious, moving and honourable precursor to this summer's last salute, Sunday's parade, the homage to the veterans and the celebration of the peace which they won for us was the most fitting of thanksgiving tributes to the brave.

And on a weekend of two marches in London, it was not difficult to determine which of them becomes this nation most.



PIPERS to the front and bands to the rear the veterans marched through London in a VE parade on Sunday



LONDON WEEKLY NEWS

VE Day parade - 3-page picture special



Turn to
page 8

LONDON WEEKLY NEWS***VE Day parade - 3-page picture special***

A TRIUMPHANT David Cameron arrives for the Veterans' reception in St James' Park



Powerful advice from world champion

A YOUNG West London woman who overcame cancer and mental illness to become world powerlifting champion has inspired Kensington students with top tips in how they can achieve their goals in life.

Monique Newton visited Sion-Manning RC Girls' School, North Kensington, to talk to year nine girls. The visit by Monique was arranged by Westway Trust, which delivers Sports Leaders sessions in the school. Westway Trust has also helped some of the students achieve Sports Leaders UK awards through volunteering placements at Easter sports camps at Westway Sports & Fitness.

Monique, an athlete mentor with the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust, survived cancer at the age of four, was kicked out of home at 15, and later battled depression, spending seven months at The Priory. Taking up the sport of powerlifting transformed her life and now, at the age of 22, she has become world champion and broken over 45 British and European records.

She told the students: "The only limits are the ones you put on yourself. A lot of people will tell you that you can't do something but the biggest barrier is yourself and you can get over this by being positive and believing in yourself."

"I didn't take up powerlifting until I was 17 so it's not too late for you. Sport opens up so many doors for you and can help you when you come to start work. Sport teaches you time keeping, communications skills and working in a team."

After talking to the students Monique, who lives in Fulham, led them in a PE session.

Sion-Manning's Head of PE, Miss Claire Towey said the girls found the assembly inspirational.

"Monique showed the girls the medals she won and worked with them in their PE lessons. The girls said they were inspired by Monique, her positive attitude to life and her achievements."

"We would like to thank Westway Trust for offering us this amazing opportunity to meet Monique."



■ STUDENTS at Sion-Manning RC School with world powerlifting champion Monique Newton and a selection of the many medals she has won. Also pictured is Lee Parker, Sports Engagement Officer at Westway Sports & Fitness.

Lee Parker, Sports Development Officer at Westway Sports & Fitness, said: "We were delighted to arrange the visit by Monique as a thank you to the students for their support during the Easter sports

camps. We aim to inspire people and help them unlock their potential. Monique is a terrific example of what you can achieve if you work hard and believe in yourself. The sports camps were really pop-

ular, with more than 2,400 young people enjoying a range of activities at the Westway Sports Centre. We were pleased the students joined us and gained experience for their Sports Leaders UK awards."

Monique has started a charity The Smile Brigade, which encourages vulnerable people to learn new skills, build confidence and increase self-esteem. You can find out more at www.thesmilebrigade.org

Trust proves a class act for adult learning

AN adult learning programme has been voted top of the class after achieving record success providing help for people learning English.

Since the Westway Trust's programme was launched 12 years ago more than 2,000 people have benefitted, improving their life skills, confidence and employment prospects.

The courses range from bite-sized introduction courses to more formal lessons in reading, writing, speaking and listening.

"The courses are aimed at local people who face barriers because of low level English, lack of education or childcare need," said Joe Freeman, Development Manager, Learning & Skills.

"People get a lot of satisfaction when they can do things in life that they couldn't do before. For example, they tell us such things as 'I called my doctor's for the first time by myself and I'm very proud!'"

"It also helps job prospects. Their aim is to stop needing friends to translate for them. They may be limited only to working on shifts where there is a Spanish speaker. They may be an entry level cleaner and want something better, such as a supervisor's role."

"Being able to communicate with people and be part of the community gives them such a sense of achievement. It's also a first step to college, volunteering or work," said Joe.

Westway Trust works in partnership with Kensington & Chelsea Council's Adult and Family Learning team to provide: 40 sessions each week at eight venues in North Kensington, Earl's Court and Chelsea. This totals 86.5 hours per week, 10 of which are taught by volunteers.

Owner ordered to repaint her home

THE owner of the £15 million "beach hut" daubed in red and white stripes at Sound End, Kensington, has been ordered by the council to get her paint brush out again.

Kensington and Chelsea Borough Council has told Mrs Zipporah Lisle-Mainwaring to repaint her mews home after neighbours complained that it "defaced" the cul-de-sac.

Mrs Lisle-Mainwaring gave her house the look of a circus tent or beach hut in a protest against the council decision not to allow her to demolish the building and rebuild it with a two-story "iceberg" basement.

The council recently created a rule that basement developments can only be one-storey deep.

A council spokesman said: "A section 215 notice has been served (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) on the owner of a property in South End by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. The property is situated within the Kensington Square Conservation Area and its condition and appearance has attracted numerous complaints to the council's planning enforcement team. In addition,



A home in South End council bosses want to be repainted

tion to the exterior being painted in red and white stripes, the property's window frames are in a poor condition.

"The owner has the right to appeal the notice by 5 June in the magistrates' courts but, if no appeal is forthcoming, the owner must repaint the front elevation white and carry out repairs to the windows by 3 July."

"If the notice is not complied with by 3 July then the council can enter the property and carry out the necessary works. Furthermore the council can charge the owner for the costs in carrying out the works and prosecute them in the magistrates' courts."

"Over the past 12 months the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea has issued 24 section 215 notices."

The council is taking special steps to ensure that the royal borough is kept looking tip-top by residents. Among the homes re-

cently ordered to be improved were 24 Pembridge Gardens W2 and 33 Warwick Road.

The council said: "The property at 24 Pembridge Gardens is a richly decorative example of 19th century Italianate architecture and the front elevation has a considerable street presence with stucco decoration contributing to the Pembridge Conservation Area. Furthermore, it is Grade II listed."

"However, the condition and appearance of the property was a concern to residents and dragging down the appearance of the entire street. Furthermore, loose and cracked render was located on the front and side elevation of the property and was becoming hazardous."

"Therefore the planning enforcement team served a section 215 notice under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 on the 23 July 2014 that required repair works were in keeping with a Grade II listed building."

"33 Warwick Road was one of a number of properties along Warwick Road that was in a poor condition and subsequently the owners were contacted by the planning enforcement team to improve the condition and appearance or face being served with a section 215."



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Titan athletes taking on clock in Westminster Mile

DAVID Weir and Marcel Hug will go head-to-head over one mile in a two-pronged attack on the three-minute barrier at the Bupa Westminster Mile road racing festival in central London on Sunday, May 24th.

The two titans of men's wheelchair racing will not only battle each other on the roads around St James's Park, but take on the clock too as they seek to make history by becoming the first wheelchair racers to complete the iconic distance in under three minutes.

Weir will be going for a Westminster Mile hat-trick just a month after coming within one second of a record seventh victory at the London Marathon. Weir lost out to Joshua George in a sprint finish on The Mall on 26 April and is determined to get back to winning ways on the course where he has twice enjoyed commanding wins since the inaugural event in 2013.

The quadruple London 2012 Paralympic Games gold medallist needs to knock a seven-second chunk from his course record from 12 months ago, but predicts Hug's presence will be enough incentive to push him beneath the target time.

"It will be a huge challenge but I

think, given the right conditions, a sub-three-minute mile is possible, especially with myself and Marcel going head-to-head," said Weir.

"In the last two years I haven't really had anyone to push me to the limit, but Marcel is my biggest rival and I know he will be doing everything he can to beat me. With both of us going for victory, the three-minute barrier may well be within reach."

Hug outprinted Weir to win the London Marathon title in 2014 but had to abandon half way through this year's race with a puncture giving the Swiss star added incentive to prove his worth on his return to London.

Tough target

"I was bitterly disappointed not to be able to defend my London Marathon title in fitting style last month," said Hug, who won five gold medals at the 2013 IPC Athletics World Championships. "This race gives me a chance to bounce back and show the British public what I can do at my best."

"I am relishing the chance to race against David again in London, and would love to be the first man under three minutes for one mile. It is a tough target, but I am sure with both of us fighting to win, it is one we can reach."

A three-minute mile by one of the world's two greatest wheelchair

racers would be a fitting highlight for the three-year-old event which this year marks the 30th anniversary of Steve Cram's world mile record at Oslo's Bislett Stadium in July 1985.

Cram's record of 3:46.32, set during an extraordinary 19-day period when he ran three world records, was unbeaten for almost eight years and still stands as the British record today.

The 2015 Bupa Westminster Mile will commemorate Cram's achievement as the world's biggest festival of mile running. Some 7,000 runners – from elites to amateurs to families with young children – are expected to take part in more than 30 races around St James's Park, starting on The Mall and finishing on Spur Road in front of Buckingham Palace.

The Bupa Westminster Mile is staged in partnership with Westminster City Council as part of Westminster's commitment to encourage more people to take up sport and be more physically active.

The Bupa Westminster Mile also marks the start of Bupa's new Feel Great Britain mission to encourage and inspire the nation to enjoy feel great moments.

For further information, please visit www.bupawestminster-mile.co.uk

Writing for the London Weekly News every week, London's most outspoken entrepreneur

Charlie Pipes Up!



Nation's decision is good for business

UNDOUBTEDLY the biggest winner from the General Election was UK business.

From the one-man-bands to the multinationals, every one of us had a dog in this fight and the thought of a Labour-led government steering the economic ship back into stormy waters proved to be enough to make even the most hardy of us feel seasick.

I was confident that this result was on the cards from the moment I sat in the conference hall last October and listened to David Cameron lay out his vision for the country for the next five years. That vision has unmistakably resonated with voters.

All the polls, projections and predictions can be torn up and consigned to

the recycling bin because, clearly, the people have spoken and given the new Conservative Government a mandate to continue the job in hand – managing an economy that generates business growth and employment for the wider benefit of society.

And with a majority government the threat of protracted coalition negotiations or even the prospect of a second General Election at the back end of the year have evaporated, which will deliver immediate stability for the business community.

This was evident in the 1.7 per cent jump in the FTSE index while the final few results were still coming in, and will help drive further investment, job creation and offer a fuel-injection to that mystical beast 'business confidence'.

The unprecedented nationalistic swing to the SNP in Scotland and the implosion of the Lib Dems aside, it appears

that the pain caused by the Labour administration still runs deep among the electorate.

I am sure that many people, be they business owners or employees who worked through, or lost jobs as a result of, the recession and experienced firsthand the impact a poorly managed economy can have on their lives, their homes and their communities, will have applied their sense of self-preservation to ensure that the future of the economy is secured.

The Prime Minister said, as he stood in front of Number 10 in the immediate aftermath of the election, that the Conservative-led coalition had laid the foundations for a better future.

Any other result would have put not only the foundations but everything that

has already been built on them at risk.

Five years ago the Tories were the political equivalent of the plumbers called in to plug the economic flood caused by the reckless actions of a bunch of cowboys.

In our experience at Pimlico Plumbers, when we're called in to sort out someone else's mess, more often than

not the customer comes back to us in the future to book us for more jobs that need to be done 'right first time'.

And that is what the electorate have told the Conservatives. Carry on sorting out the mess you were left with, but also keep building and improving.

Armed with the tools of his trade, David Cameron and his government have the ability and experience to get the job done and build a country where businesses and the people they employ can flourish.

Views expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of this newspaper

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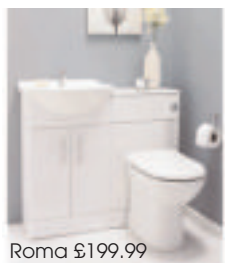
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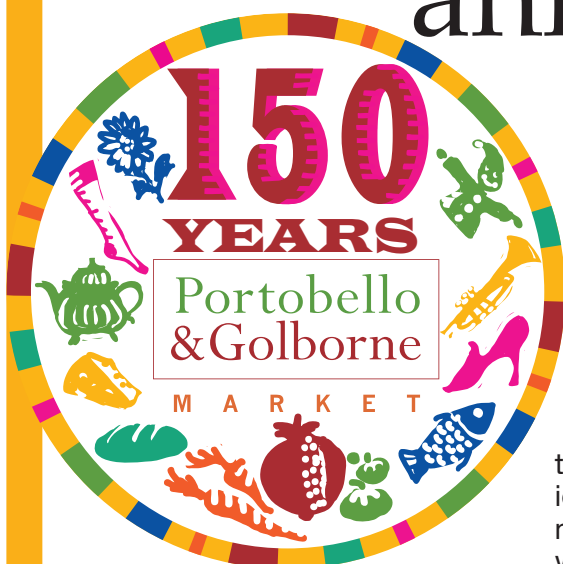
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Portobello and Golborne Market celebrates its 150th anniversary this year!



LONDON'S Portobello and Golborne Road market is one of the world's best loved markets. On busy Fridays and Saturdays, the market stretches a mile along Portobello Road and continues around the corner into Golborne Road. Hundreds of traders sell all sorts of everything, old and new, and there's plenty of delicious food.

Though rightly famous for antiques, the market is a haven for lovers of fashion, food, books, music, vintage and more. It's the place for anyone who wants to find something really unique or

just loves a great bargain.

Surrounding Portobello market are lots of unique independent shops. On Saturdays all the antiques arcades open, with literally hundreds of specialist dealers in a maze of kiosks to explore. If you like shopping without knowing exactly what you'll find, you'll love Portobello and Golborne market. It's real London with loads of character, a melting pot of people from all over the world, filled with treasure and bargains to discover.

Love the streets you shop in: shop Portobello & Golborne Market!

May 2015 events:

FOUR different themed Love Your Local Market walking tours on 15, 16, 22 & 23 May (Awesome Antiques, Brilliant Bargains, Extraordinary Edibles and Fabulous Fashion). Tickets are £5 and include a free 150 year edition Notting Hill Shopping bag and hot drink upon completion of the tour. Participants can choose from Barista's Fusion (Fridays only), Bluebells, Cafe Eve, Golborne Deli, Kipferl, Lowry & Baker, Orange Coffee, Pedlars (15 & 16 May only), or Snaps & Rye. Book tickets at www.rbkcmarkets.eventbrite.com

Special stalls in Tavistock Square W11 for Love Your Local Market: a Youth Enterprise Market on 16 May and a Community Market on 23 May.

Official anniversary celebration on Saturday May 30th (the 150th day of our 150th year). The market stalls and shops will be festooned with 2km of bespoke 150-year bunting and dozens of market stallholders are offering exclusive one-day-only promotions, from discounts and gifts-with-purchase to limited-edition signed artwork and a raffle with two prizes of £50 worth of antique toy soldiers. Shoppers should look out for stalls displaying 'Exclusive 150 year celebration offer' signs and ask traders for details. There will be other mini-events including:

- A costumed performance of Victorian songs by Radio Days Music at the junction of Portobello Road and Lonsdale Road from 12 noon.
- A day-long display of antique and vintage bicycles from the Veteran Cycle Club in Tavistock Square W11.

- Free 'Dr Bike' bicycle tune-ups in Tavistock Square W11.
- A free ticketed 'instameet' organised by @igerslondon (already sold out but hopeful participants can join the waiting list at www.meetup.com/InstagramersLondon)
- A cake-cutting ceremony in Tavistock Square with the Mayor of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea cutting a spectacular birthday cake donated by Hummingbird Bakery.



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UNDER THE WESTWAY

Angela McConville, Chief Executive, Westway Trust, talks about the 15 year blueprint for the regeneration of over a mile of land under the Westway flyover – Destination Westway 2030.

When the Westway flyover was built more than 40 years ago, local people were hugely impacted. This infrastructure project was devastating for a community that was already disadvantaged by living amid terrible slum housing.

But this same community was defiant and demanded to be compensated for the burden of having a six-lane motorway built above it. That fighting spirit led to the formation of the North Kensington Amenity Trust – now the Westway Trust – a charity established in 1971 with a start-up grant of £25,000.

From the outset we were all about regeneration, taking on the estate as a

“ribbon of rubble”. When we managed to construct buildings where there was once only debris, it was justifiably seen as a real achievement.

Now, 43 years on, we have a solid track record of creating an incredible community underneath the flyover, in an area previously condemned by transport planners as mere wasteland.

We have managed the area in ways that are very creative and flexible, responding to the needs of the community and local charities who receive from us hundreds of thousands of pounds in grants and discounted rents, every year.

We have a duty to safeguard our historic commitments to the community. The last major upgrade to some of our facilities dates back to the 1970s and they are in urgent need of improvement.

Since I arrived at the Trust in 2013, I’ve been listening and talking to locals about the local area and those conversations have helped shape the direction of our 15-year blueprint: Destination Westway 2030. Guiding this work are two priorities – im-

proved local health and a more prosperous community.

Disproportionate health problems are evidenced by mortality rates, childhood obesity and mental health needs. Despite the wealth in the area, pockets of acute economic disadvantage exist. The Trust’s work focusses on providing affordable work spaces; boosting apprenticeship opportunities locally for young people; delivering courses that improve skills and help people secure employment or work placements; offering bursaries for education or sporting opportunities; and supporting supplementary school activities.

We have to strike a balance between delivering these benefits and making regeneration work commercially. While there are pockets of land where we can build new homes, our focus is on sensitive developments that directly benefit the local community. While commercial viability is necessary, we want to really impact the local community, and that is what drives our decisions.

I am encouraged we can strike this

balance as we have been good at making the most of the fact that rich and poor live side by side. For example, at the sports centre people pay for their sessions, like a regular gym, but our thriving social enterprise model means we put £1m annually in to community sports programmes for the disadvantaged. The demographic around us is changing and we have a chance to take advantage of that in a way that achieves our social goals.

We will always be sensitive to the local environment. Our team works across the estate and we are deeply in tune with the needs of the community. We work closely with local residents, groups, charities, businesses and individuals, to keep improving the area.

In the coming weeks I look forward to updating you on what we are doing, so you can help shape our plans, every step of the way.



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- Advice on feeling well and staying positive
- Take Time To Talk tea cart
- Health information and advice from GPs, urgent care and 111, pharmacies and other local services

Queen’s Park maternity champions

NHS West London Clinical Commissioning Group

Fun events to help patients think about their health care

By Kalwant Sahota
NHS West London Clinical Commissioning Group

Our patients tell us what really matters to them is their face-to-face interactions with us. For the second year in a row, our summer series of roadshow events will be providing them with exactly that.

At our stalls, we act out different health scenarios to help local people think about how to use their NHS wisely, and how to choose the right care for their need. These fun events are a brilliant opportunity to reach out to those members of our community that we can sometimes struggle to connect with, such as people with mental health conditions, people who speak English as a second language, and people who are homeless. It’s suitable for all the family, as we always have plenty on offer to entertain children and young people.

The events will be held on the following dates and locations: *Spring into Health* with the Beethoven Health Champions will be held on May 16th, 12 noon–4pm, at Queen’s Park Gardens and St Jude’s Hall, Ilbert Street W10; *The Art of Wellness Festival* will be held on May 29th 5pm–10pm with Chelsea Theatre Health Champions; *World’s End Place, SW10 ODR; There is More to A&E: Fun Day* with Dalgarno Health Champions will be held on May 31st 12 noon–4pm, 1 Webb Close, Sutton Way, W10 5HJ.

There will be a mix of activities at each event, and they will be free, accessible, and open to all. At the *Spring into Health* with the Champions event, there will be pony rides, henna, face-painting, pampering for new mums, and even a top celebrity appearance by Peppa Pig. *The Art of Wellness Festival*, meanwhile, will be an evening event, featuring live music, street food, and the opportunity to create your own street art. *There is More Than A&E Fun Day* will include a crèche, free refreshments, and free massages.

But it’s not just about the fun activities. There will be GPs and other NHS staff at the events, so attendees can chat to NHS representatives about what they want from their health service. We know these roadshows are useful. Last year we had some fantastic conversations with local residents, and those conversations have played a big part in forming our priorities for 2015–16.

For example, residents told us that they wanted us to improve primary care. We now have extended hours across many GP practices, with many providing week-

end openings. Improving access to primary care is one of our top priorities for the coming year. For example, we’ve set up children’s primary care hubs, and we’ve created Primary Care Navigators to manage the care path for patients with complex primary care needs.

Another top priority of ours for the coming year is to continue our work in ensuring that mental health is considered as important as physical health. We’ll be using the opportunity of these roadshows to tell patients how they can access psychological therapies and other mental health services, such as our Take Time to Talk service which we launched in June. The Take Time to Talk Tea Cart will be at the *Spring into Health* with the Champions event, offering residents the opportunity to find out more about how to get mental health support in their area.

Louise Proctor, managing director of West London CCG, said: “We are engaging with patients across Queen’s Park & Paddington, Harrow Road, and Westbourne Park as well as throughout the borough of Kensington & Chelsea on a regular basis. There are some groups of people we make contact with very easily, and there are others who it can be harder to reach. We want to make sure all patients have a fair chance to access the services their NHS provides.

“It is important that harder to reach demographics, such as people with mental health conditions, people who speak English as a second language, and people who are homeless, are able to get hold of vital information about the different care options available to them, so that they can make informed choices about what care is best for them and their families. Do they know where their nearest pharmacy is? Do they know that many GP surgeries are open on weekends? Do they know that they can walk into urgent care centres if they need care immediately, without it being an emergency that requires a trip to A&E?”

“These roadshows are an innovative way of cutting out the middle man and communicating directly, face-to-face with our own patients and residents.”

For more information please contact Kalwant Sahota on 020 3350 4356 wllccg.team@nwl.nhs.uk.

FOR RESIDENTS AND VISITORS

London



WEEKLY News

ISSUE 23

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Thursday, May 14th 2015



A Queen among gardeners

■ HM Queen Elizabeth on one of her many visits to RHS Chelsea, where she is Patron

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Of all of the royal events of the year, the Chelsea Flower Show is the one that most puts the nation's number one Briton in bloom.

Indeed, it is hard to find a photograph of The Queen at the show when she is not beaming with pleasure.

Although Her Majesty is Patron of the Royal Horticultural Society and therefore Chelsea is somewhat "her" show, this, the world's finest display of gardening genius and the unofficial but glorious start of summer, means much more than just another royal engagement.

For Chelsea is a joy for The Queen as it highlights her own personal interest in gardening. And although millions will see the photographs and TV pictures of her visit, few know of the extent to which The Queen has become one of the greatest gardeners in the world.

Through more than 70 years of thoughtful planning and attentive care, The Queen has personally

By Geoff Baker

supervised the growth of the garden at Buckingham Palace so that it now stands as among the finest in her realm. It is also certainly one of the largest – at 39 acres, or the size of 22 football pitches, the Palace garden requires considerable care to keep it in such acclaimed top condition.

Interestingly, at a time when the Green Party unpopularity wants to close down the British monarchy – an event about as likely to happen as their leader becoming the president of North Korea – for decades The Queen has been well ahead of the ecological movement in her approach to her garden.

As a pioneer of environmentally-friendly planning, Her Majesty is something of a Capability Green and fellow gardeners could learn much from her secrets of success.

One such royal secret is the simple, organic way in which The Queen deals with the aphids that threaten the magnificent Rose Garden at the Palace, the 25 flower beds of different varieties of roses, some more than 100 years old.

Like all gardeners, Her Majesty risks the great

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THE paper serving ROYAL London

ROYAL LONDON

In the run up to Chelsea Flower Show

A 'green' Queen ahead of her time

FROM page 1

British plague of greenfly as summer comes; ruinous to blooms like Golden Wedding, the beautiful yellow dawn of a commemorative rose, or Royal William, the dark red hybrid tea rose created to mark the birth of her grandson.

But unlike many gardeners, The Queen does not use pesticides to control the flower-killers; she has her own special way of keeping down the greenfly – garlic water. A spray simply infused with garlic powder is liberally applied each week to the royal roses; the smell goes in a day and so do the greenfly.

Another royal trick to help keep the Palace garden immaculate is what Her Majesty calls "The Arisings".

Two tonnes a day of Arisings arise, or rather descend, from the horses of the Royal Mews and this most excellent of manures is made into the Queen's blend of top compost by mixing it with the green waste which is anything but wasted.

Mark Lane, Gardens Manager at Buckingham Palace, explains that this initiative ensures that the gardens look their best whilst encouraging wildlife and plant life to thrive without any detrimental effects on the environment:

"At Buckingham Palace, 99 per cent of green waste is recycled on site," he says.

"Green waste includes grass cuttings, twigs, branches, the Arisings and soiled straw from the stables in the Royal Mews.

"Waste is also brought in from Kensington Palace and Marlborough House grounds. This is put through a shredder so that bacteria can operate more quickly on smaller pieces of material.

"The waste is regularly turned until it has rotted sufficiently to be used as mulch. We then use this when preparing new flower beds. The mulch protects plants from heat and cold, retains water, suppresses weed germination and prevents soil from being washed away in the rain."

But there's more to the Green Queen and her love of nature yet. Her Majesty, who in the 1970s once organised a walking police escort for a family of ducks who would waddle from the Palace to St James's Park, has done more than any other monarch to foster wildlife in the Palace gardens.

For instance, large pieces of wood are stacked in piles in the Palace grounds and these piles provide habitats for a variety of flora and fauna, including beetles, spiders and fungi – some 2,500 different species of insects call the Palace their home.

Tree stumps are not removed, but are left to rot away naturally, providing a perfect environment for insects to lay their eggs and hatch their larvae in. Dead trees are also left alone, with one such tree at the bottom of the Rose Garden currently providing a habitat for a family of Woodpeckers.

"Whereas weed killer was once used on the paths of the Buckingham Palace grounds, now a weed burning machine is used instead," says Mr Lane.

"This breaks up the cells of living plants so that they explode through heat, meaning that there is no need for chemicals which could potentially be harmful to wildlife."

Recent surveys have shown that five damselfly and seven dragonfly species live in or near the lake, and 83 species of birds have been seen in the garden. The highlights of the sightings were of Kingfisher, Woodcock, Chiffchaff and Redwing – and an occasional Parakeet.

Since 2009 the garden has supported four successful bee hives positioned on the island in the magnificent, three-acre man-made lake. Surrounded in the summer by wildflowers, this area is paradise

At Buckingham Palace, 99 per cent of green waste is recycled on site

for bees says the royal beekeeper, John Chapple. "It is virtually wild and it must be one of the very few sites in London that have been left so beautifully natural, it's near-heaven for bees," said Mr Chapple.

The royal honey is much prized and is said to be delicious, so much so that on a visit last year to The Vatican Her Majesty chose a gift of Palace honey as her personal present to The Pope. It is also used



THE view across the man-made lake in the gardens to the back of Buckingham Palace

The Portobello Olive Bar

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THE Rose Garden at Buckingham Palace showing the Admiralty Temple, above, and the 4.5m high Waterloo Vase below. Roses are kept free from aphids with garlic spray.



ROYAL LONDON

In the run up to Chelsea Flower Show

in the royal kitchens, as is the luxurious jam made from the 35 species of mulberry tree which grow at the Palace.

Her Majesty inherited her love of gardens from her parents. Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother had a life-long passion for flowers and gardening and left her beautiful mark on the glorious grounds of her royal homes. To fully appreciate the late Queen Mother's evident knowledge of horticulture and to see from where The Queen got her eye, I recommend the book that she created with the Marchioness of Salisbury, "The Gardens Of Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother; a delightful study of distinctive design.

But back at Buckingham Palace, where the gardens are a national treasure in themselves, sustainable plant life is encouraged with a long grass policy currently in use over approximately 10% of the Palace garden area. Around 350 different types of wildflowers grow in these areas, such as Creeping Buttercup and Herb Robert, and are allowed to go through an entire yearly cycle of growth, including seed spreading, before the grasses are cut at the end of August.

Flora and fauna

This means that wildflowers are allowed to reproduce and sustain themselves without interference. In addition, an 800-metre stretch of ground around the edge of the lake is cut on a rotational basis every four years, again, allowing flora and fauna to prosper uninterrupted.

As well as sustaining existing flora and fauna, new wildlife and plant life is also encouraged. Over the last 10 years, many more seed-bearing plants have been introduced into the garden; these encourage a wealth of bird life to come into the Palace grounds to feed during the winter months.

More native plants have also been brought in. Seed-bearing plants include a wide variety of Cotonaster and Rowans, and natives have included the Aspen and female Black Poplar.

Mr Lane says: "We also ensure that the machinery which is used for the upkeep of the gardens is environmentally sound. The weed-burning machine runs off the same liquid petroleum gas supply which is used for The Duke of Edinburgh's taxi. Biodegradable diesel, lubricants and oils are used in lawn mowers and other pieces of machinery."

According to gardening guru Alan Titchmarsh, Her Majesty so adores her garden so much that she has a weekly posy cut and delivered to her when she returns to Buckingham Palace from Windsor. The half-dozen blooms are taken from the palace gardens and are a gift from her gardeners.

"She has a little posy cut for her every Monday, which is placed on her desk when she gets back from Windsor," said Titchmarsh.

"It will typically have six or seven different types of flowers from the garden to give her a little snapshot of what's looking good at that time.

"What is quite evident is Her Majesty loves what we would call English cottage garden flowers - unostentatious flowers, not things that are too exotic."

However, like every gardener the world over, The Queen is always enchanted by the splendour and peerless creativity that is the wonder of the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. This year her delight at the fabulous exhibits will be the more so as her grandson Prince Harry will be bringing a portrait of Africa to the show when his Sentebale charity unveils a garden modelled on a children's camp in Lesotho.

The Hope in Vulnerability garden invokes the Mamohato Children's Centre, using traditional African building techniques and, hopefully, a native poppy which has never been seen in Britain before.

Prince Harry has hired Matt Keightley, the designer of the Help For Heroes garden which won the People's Choice award at last year's show, for Sentebale's second Chelsea garden after its successful debut in 2013.

The design will use a mixture of British plants and those native to Lesotho to replicate the varying landscape in the mountain kingdom, and Mr Keightley is trying to germinate a papaver aculeatus orange-coloured poppy, native to Lesotho, in the hope of being the first person to show one at Chelsea.

Whatever his success with that, the Chelsea Flower Show remains the finest rose in the crown of the best of British gardening, a wonder which everyone should experience at least once in a lifetime.

● **The RHS Chelsea Flower Show, May 19th-23rd, The Royal Hospital Chelsea SW3 4SL**
Tickets from www.rhs.org.uk

WHERE TO SEE YOUR FAVOURITE ROYAL

FULL details of future and recent events in the ever-busy diaries of the many members of The Royal Family are available from the official website www.royal.gov.uk but here's the London schedule for the week ahead for Where To See A Royal.

● Tuesday, May 12th

Princess Alexandra, as Royal Patron of Children and Families Across Borders, will open the International Spring Fair at Kensington Town Hall W8.

● Wednesday, May 13th

The Princess Royal, as Warden of the Fishmongers' Company, will attend a Livery Civic Dinner at the Fishmongers' Hall, Tower Bridge.

The Duke of Gloucester, as Joint Patron of Thames Landscape Strategy, will attend a reception to mark its 21st anniversary at the Rose Theatre, Kingston.

● Thursday, May 14th

The Princess Royal, as Patron of the Royal National Children's Foundation, will hold a fund-raising dinner at St James's Palace.

The Princess Royal, as President of the City and Guilds of London Institute, will hold the Prince Philip Medal presentation at St James's Palace.

The Princess Royal, as Warden of the Fishmongers' Company, will attend a committee of wardens meeting at the Fishmongers' Hall, Tower Bridge.

The Duke of Gloucester, as Honorary Fellow of the Institution of Structural Engineers, will officially open the international headquarters at Bastwick Street EC1.

The Duchess of Gloucester, as President of the Royal Academy of Music, will attend the opera at the RAM on Marylebone Road.

● Friday, May 15th

The Princess Royal, as Patron of the Women's Royal Naval Service Benevolent Trust, will attend the AGM and reception at Trinity House, Tower Hill.

● Monday, May 18th

The Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, the Princess Royal and the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester will visit the Chelsea Flower Show.

The Duke of Edinburgh, as Colonel of the Grenadier Guards, will chair the Regimental Council Meeting at Buckingham Palace and will attend the First Guards Club Dinner at Ironmongers' Hall.

● Tuesday, May 19th

The Duke of Edinburgh, as Patron of the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust, will hold a reception at Buckingham Palace.

The Earl of Wessex, as President of the King George's Fund for Sailors, will attend the AGM at Mansion House, Walbrook EC4.

The Earl of Wessex, as Trustee of the Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation, will attend a dinner at The Savoy Hotel.

The Duchess of Gloucester will attend a dinner to mark the Asian Women of Achievement Awards at the London Hilton.



■ THE late Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother also had a passion for flowers and gardening

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SHOWBIZ SPECIAL

As Fleetwood Mac begin their tour in London

The dream reunion would be ...

WHEN Fleetwood Mac return to London in sold-out triumph at the O2 shortly, in the back of some minds in the crowd will be the wonder, the fans' great prayer, "will this be the night when it finally happens, the night we have spent 40 years hoping for?"

If it does, it would be the sensational night the like of which British blues has never experienced before; an event that might even put in the shade the reunion of Led Zeppelin at the same arena in 2007.

For the great hope of the diehard Fleetwood Mac fans is that one night the band will be joined onstage by their original members, the greatest blues guitar trio ever to have played together on this planet – Peter Green, Jeremy Spencer and Danny Kirwan.

Indeed were it to happen, "sensational" would not be the fitting word for it; "miraculous" would describe it better.

Green, Spencer and Kirwan were the legends who first created the sound of the band that went on to sell more than 100 millions albums. Side-armed by the pair of blues maestros, Peter Green – said by B.B. King to be the only white guitarist to have sent shivers down his spine – led a band which was peerless in its time; creating eternal classics that include Albatross, Man Of The World, Black Magic Woman, Need Your Love So Bad, Oh Well and Green Manalishi.

But a cocktail of drugs, drink and religion broke up the golden trio and one-by-one in the Seventies they left the band and passed into obscurity.

The music industry wrote them off; writers mocked and concocted sensationalisms around how Jeremy Spencer said he was "just popping out to buy a magazine" but joined the Children Of God sect instead and never came back, and Peter Green was widely said to be a bleak shadow of former glorious ability.

But the truth is that, technically, the much wished-for reunion could happen, although it is the highest of hopes.

Green, voted by Mojo magazine as one of the top three greatest guitarists in the world, has never truly stopped playing. Although he left Fleetwood Mac 45 years ago this month, tragically fated to become schizophrenic and to spend time in psychiatric hospitals, in recent years he has bravely pulled out of desolation and mounted UK and Australian tours.

All sold out

None of the venues were on a par with the 20,000-seater that the band which he founded will play in the capital on May 27th, but the Peter Green & Friends gigs all sold out and were, by all accounts, brilliant performances.

As Eric Clapton told Guitar World magazine, "I would never completely give up on the guy; he is one of the best, it's all there".

Popular belief has it that Jeremy Spencer so fell even further into the darkness of obscurity that nobody in the business has a clue where he is. Some said that after he "got religion" he disappeared into Brazil, others said he went to ground in Italy.

But the happy truth is that Spencer, now twice a great-grandfather, is alive and well – and still playing – living in County Meath, and that recently he hooked up with his old bandmates when he went to see Fleetwood Mac in concert in Dublin.

Last year Spencer – who in fact and despite the mythology has never stopped playing guitar – released a new album, "Coventry Blue", which was hailed by critics as "a masterclass, Jeremy Spencer has not lost a step". Like Green, he has also been touring in recent years.

So that's two who are entirely capable of making the great dream reunion – a comeback which Fleetwood Mac bassist John McVie has said he and drummer Mick Fleetwood would welcome.

"If we could get Peter and Jeremy to do it, I'd probably do it. I know that Mick would do it in a flash," said McVie.

But he added: "Unfortunately, I don't think there's much chance of Danny doing it. Bless his heart".

And there lies the tragedy of Fleetwood Mac; for in the story of Danny Kirwan, British blues, the sound of sorrow, reached its saddest blues of all time.

By rights, Danny Kirwan should be a guitar god liv-



■ **THE WAY THEY WERE:** Fleetwood Mac in 1969, left to right John McVie, Jeremy Spencer, Mick Fleetwood, and Danny Kirwan with Peter Green laying in front

By Geoff Baker

ing in a mansion in Kensington, feted regularly at the BRITS and Q awards and openly-revered by every star guitarist who has come after him with a fraction of his talent.

Brixton-born Kirwan was a guitar genius who was only 17-years-old when he first came to the attention of Fleetwood Mac, impressing them overwhelmingly. Within a year he was in the band and Green – generally held by musicians to be the only British blues guitarist to be on a par with Clapton – was lauding him openly.

"I would never have done Albatross if it wasn't for Danny, I would never have had a number one hit record", said Green of his partner who was the only member of the original Fleetwood Mac to be blessed with pin-up good looks.

Kirwan quickly grew to become the band's main

songwriter with Green and together they developed a style of melodic twin guitar meshing that has never been bettered. When Green quit Fleetwood Mac and left the band reeling in uncertainty and confusion, it was Kirwan who shouldered the lead to carry it on and created the hit album Kiln House, hailed by Rolling Stone magazine as "a venture that would make Buddy Holly and Gene Vincent unabashedly proud as godparents to the album".

Kirwan stayed the course for a while, but the demon of the music business – relentless, unreasonable pressure that nobody outside of the industry can ever properly appreciate – crushed him and drove him to the painkiller of drink, crippling his health and inevitably bringing about his sacking from the band.

Torment

"It was torment for him, really, to be up there, and it reduced him to someone who you just looked at and thought 'My God!'" said Mick Fleetwood, who

was charged with unenviable job of firing him.

"Although he was asked to leave, the way I was looking at it was – I hoped – almost putting him out of his agony."

Encouraged by his manager, the legendary Clifford Davis, Danny Kirwan soldiered on, releasing a handful of solo albums and singles but as he had lost the confidence to promote them by performing live, he fell off the magic ladder and the rarely-sympathetic music industry left him behind as his mental health went from unstable to very ill.

Now, nobody seems to know the whereabouts of Danny Kirwan, except that he is thought to be still living in London. Recent reports have varied from placing him in a Soho hostel for recovering alcoholics, to living on social security in a care home and, worse, homelessness.

In his 1990 autobiography, Mick Fleetwood claimed Kirwan lived in a South London mental hospital. In a subsequent interview, Peter Green said, "I think Mick and I are responsible for where he is now. I wish I could help him, but I don't know how."

Two years ago the Fleetwood Mac fans' Newsgroup reported: "Danny Kirwan is currently living in Covent Garden, he is still a down and out and is a semi-permanent resident of a hostel for the homeless there. He apparently remembers being a blues legend but never talks about it."

However, on his most-recent sighting, Fleetwood Mac biographer Martin Celmins said Kirwan was "looking a lot fitter, stronger and more together".

He added: "Best news of all, perhaps, is that he keeps a guitar in his room and plays quite often for his own pleasure. He remains a very private person who keeps himself to himself and is nicely settled in the care centre where he's been for some time now".

As many fans agree, it could be a cruelty to impose on a fragile casualty of the toughest of all businesses our hopes and wishes to see Danny Kirwan back up onstage. But when his millionaire old mates rock the roof off the O2 this month, it might be nice if some dedication was made to the iconic London guitarist who helped them get there before he became a most tragic example of the blues that he mastered so well.



■ **OLDER AND WISER?** The existing band members - John McVie, Stevie Nicks, Lindsey Buckingham, Mick Fleetwood and Christine McVie - would welcome a reunion

● Fleetwood Mac at The O2 May 27th & 28th.

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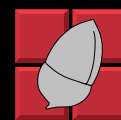
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WINE & DINE

The food and
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Mary Berry and her best bits

by Kate Whiting

IN the company of Mary Berry, it's easy to become completely mesmerised. She's as neat as a pin, pale bob coiffed to perfection, set off by her trademark hot-pink cardigan.

And then there are the idyllic-sounding, Famous Five-esque tales of childhood holidays by the sea, and catching and cooking her own fish for her latest television series, all delivered in her clipped, warm grandmotherly voice, with smiles and a small hand reaching out every so often to pat you affectionately on the arm.

If it weren't for the arm pats, I'd have forgotten why I was with her entirely, happy just to smile back and listen, basking in the Berry glow.

But there's the rather pressing matter of her new non-Bake Off series to discuss.

Absolute Favourites sees Berry, who's just celebrated her 80th birthday, travel from the seaside to the countryside, to farmers' markets, allotments and herb gardens, and then back home to share the inspirations behind some of her most beloved recipes with her family - and the nation.

In the first of six episodes, she indulges in one of her favourite seaside passions, prawning on the Kent Coast, before cooking up a new dish of seafood linguine, which she tops off with a knickerbocker glory, after a visit to an ice cream parlour in Broadstairs, that hasn't changed since she was a child.

"I loved childhood holidays by the sea. We used to stay on a farm in Devon and we walked to the beach every day, did the same thing - paddling, castles, picnic - and then came back at about 4 o'clock and helped with milking and gathering eggs and had tractor rides," she says, beaming.

It was on such trips that she learned to forage for blackberries, mushrooms and sloes for sloe gin, and she still makes sure she's prepared when she goes out walking today.

"The other day, we saw some mushrooms and my son said, 'Mum, have you got your bag in your pocket?' I've always got one in my pocket, just in case. You never know what you're going to find."

Episode two takes her into the countryside to forage for wild mushrooms, which she cooks in garlic and serves on toasted brioche, before achieving a long-held ambition - learning to fly fish.

"It was such an exciting day. We went to a house with a stretch of water on a tributary of the River Test."

"I've never seen anything so beautiful. As you looked down, it wasn't very deep, the bottom was crystal clear and you could see the fish - it reminded me of the river at Lacock when I was child, and leaning over the bridge and seeing that shallow water."

Berry did catch a fish, and holds up her hands to illustrate how big it was: "I'm not exaggerating, it was this size!"

It was so big, in fact, it didn't fit in the pan she was meant to be cooking it in.

"I had to take it off the bone and fry the fillet. If only I'd caught one smaller and just put three slashes in, it would have looked so much better. But it was live, it



was real, it was delicious."

Berry, whose enduring and wide appeal is evident in the fact she's just been voted number 73 in FHM's Top 100 Sexiest Women 2015 list (beating Jennifer Lopez, no less), grew up in Bath, the daughter of a surveyor dad and housewife mum.

"My childhood was very conventional, I was a wartime baby, so brought up in frugal times, and I was fortunate enough to have a mum who did everything from scratch.

Rationing

"We had rationing, so we had to have goat's milk, but we didn't know any different. We had eggs, we had vegetables from the garden and we kept pigs, so we had a lot of pork and chicken.

"It was very happy, quite different from childhood nowadays, no theme parks. We did things at home. We just had friends round to play and made things, we carved things out of wood and did hopscotch. There was no option to go anywhere.

"The biggest treat in the school holidays was going swimming, and I remember the smell of the swimming pool in Bath, it was always chlorine - and you queued up."

The first thing she remembers cooking is a treacle pudding in her cookery class at school.

"I took it home and my father said, 'It's as good as your mother's', which was real praise."

In her mid 20s, she went to Paris to

study at Le Cordon Bleu, which, at the time, she says, was "pretty phoney" - and she was lonely, living in a hostel on the city's South Bank. In 1970, she published her first of many cookbooks, the Hamlyn All Colour Cookbook, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Nowadays, surprisingly for someone who has to taste test an endless array of cake every year on The Great British Bake Off, she doesn't have much of a sweet tooth.

"I used to have a very sweet tooth, but at home, I eat very little sugar. To be honest, I don't eat a lot of cake.

"I have to watch my waistline very carefully, and I have no wish to get large. I have been large - and people will be very beastly to me - those who haven't been large before - will say, 'I don't want to get like her because she eats so many cakes'."

She stays trim by walking and playing tennis, but you'll never catch her going casual in a velour tracksuit: "My age group look dreadful in tracksuits!"

It's not all healthy eating and cooking from scratch for Berry though - she admits she is partial to a ready meal, every now and again.

"Say I've been working at Bake Off for three days, on the way home, I will go into Marks & Spencer and do their £10 thing. First of all, I go for the wine... and that for me is a huge treat!"

● **Mary Berry's Absolute Favourites starts on BBC Two this Friday, May 15**



MARK HIX'S RECIPE OF THE WEEK

Prawn, okra and coriander broth

OKRA is such an under-appreciated vegetable. Personally, I love it and always make a point of ordering it if I go for an Indian. It is very versatile: as crucial an ingredient in the Louisiana dish gumbo - where its gelatinous qualities help to thicken it - as it is in some curries.

Serves 4

The heads and shells from the raw prawns, below
1 fish stock cube dissolved in 1.2ltrs of hot water
1 small leek, halved, roughly chopped and washed
½tsp fennel seeds
10 black peppercorns
2 cloves of garlic, halved
½tsp tomato purée

To serve

12 raw, whole seawater prawns with the heads and shells off
16-20 pieces of okra, washed and thinly sliced on the angle
1-2tbsp chopped coriander

Remove the heads and shells from the prawns. Slit the flesh down the back, about a third of a centimetre into the body, then give them a good wash in cold water; now put to one side or refrigerate.

To make the broth, put all of the ingredients into a saucepan, bring to the boil, season and simmer very gently for 40 minutes, skimming occasionally if necessary. Strain through a fine-meshed sieve into a clean saucepan.

To serve, put the prawns into the broth and simmer for a minute, then add the okra and simmer for a further minute; remove from the heat, stir in the coriander and serve.



THREE OF THE BEST... Chopping boards

● **Joseph Joseph Rinse & Chop Plus, £15**
(Debenhams.com)

Rinse and chop your food with this nifty device from Joseph Joseph, before folding it to tip your ingredients into the pan with ease. No more dropping veg all over the floor!



● **Matalan Wooden Chopping Board, £6**
(Matalan.co.uk)

Put some heart into your cooking with this cute heart-shaped chopping board at a price you can love. Doubles up as a pretty cheeseboard.



● **Argos Set Of 4 Plastic Chopping Boards, £14.99** (Argos.co.uk)

Stay safe in the kitchen and avoid cross-contamination with this set of sturdy, colour-coded chopping boards, which pack away neatly to save on storage space.





TALK OF THE TOWN

MUSIC ★ THEATRE ★ REVIEWS

The entertainment scene across London

Stepping up to be a Jersey Boy

ONE of the most successful West End shows of all time - Jersey Boys - is still packing them in at the Piccadilly Theatre.

Now moving into its eighth year, the musical based on the 60s American band, The Four Seasons has been seen by an estimated 20 million people and, with a nationwide tour also proving to be a box office hit, the show goes from strength to strength.

I watched it for the first time just last week and was then lucky enough to catch up with one of the newest Jersey Boys, Gary Watson, for a chat about this musical phenomenon.

Gary plays the Four season bassist Nick Massi and joined the cast in February. As the show is set in the east coast US city of New Jersey I was really surprised when Gary first spoke with his naturally rich soft North East accent. I asked how his first few months had been.

"It's been fantastic," he said. "It's such an iconic show in London's theatrical landscape. I've been hoping to be a part of it for many years now, so to be a part of its huge success is brilliant."

The story follows the lives and careers of Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons, from when the band was first conceived right through to their worldwide domination. Gary's character, Nick, spends some of the first part of the show in prison. Gary tells me about the band, who were known to be no angels.

Unique selling point

"They all had their moments, the guys. The unique selling point about Jersey Boys is that it's a true warts and all tale of boys who did good; ordinary guys from Jersey who have become these incredible stars. It's not like today when they have a shelf life. They were some of the biggest performers on the planet at the time so they encountered all the trappings of fame. It's been really interesting to find out about all the ups and downs and they really were fascinating, in particular my character. He had great struggles with the fame aspect because all he wanted to do was make music which they did fantastically well."

Sadly the real Nick Massi passed away prior to the musical being produced.

"He was informed that there was going to be a workshop of the show about ten years ago but unfortunately he died soon after. At the height of their fame he only stayed with the band for three years and then he left because he couldn't deal with all the different things that come with great fame. He went back to live a normal life as a tailor in Jersey with his family."

"He basically taught Frankie Valli how to sing so he was an incredible guy and it's a shame that he didn't ever get to see the show come to fruition. We know his family are very happy with how he's portrayed and it's a shame that

I'll never get to meet him. I'm sure that he would have loved the show like all of the other 'Seasons' do when they come to see it."

Playing a character based on a real person rather than a fictional one must be more difficult and I asked Gary how he had tackled this.

"I had really definite ideas on how I wanted to play him. The other 'Seasons' had quite a lot of input into the show and gave lots of nuggets about things that really happened. Nick is the one character where there is that flexibility. Because he left the band so early, there's very limited information about Nick online. Fortunately I did know a guy who played him about five years ago so I asked him for some tips. He was brilliant and told me lots of incites from early on with the original creatives. It's so well written that when you combine the brilliant songs, the staging and the music it really handles itself. My character has some comic moments as well as some quite dramatic ones and because the script is so great it delivers itself really."

Ticket sales

With West End shows under so much pressure to compete with their rivals for ticket sales I asked Gary what sets Jersey Boys apart from the rest.

"People come for the songs but they stay for the story. It really is one of the finest pieces of musical theatre in London. The fact that it's still going so strong into its eighth year is testament to that. The songs are fantastic, the staging, the direction, the choreography, the band and the cast of, course. Everything is absolutely top notch. We keep things to a very high standard so if you just want a fantastic night of musical theatre and a slice of pop history get on down to see the Jersey Boys."

I've recently started to dig around in the world of the musical Superfan. I'm starting to realise the extent to which some enthusiasts will go to maintain their stage addiction. Jersey Boys is no different and I ask Gary about their devotees.

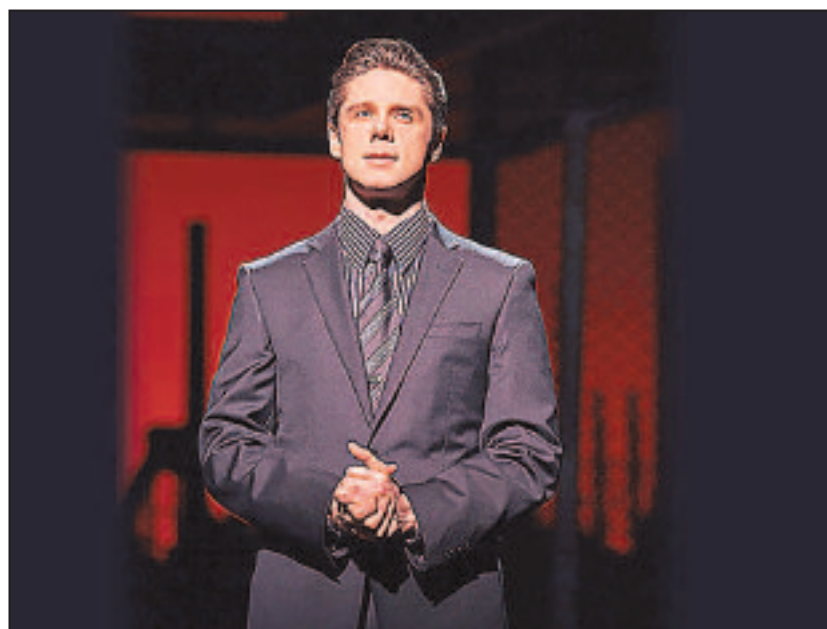
"We have these incredible hard core fans. Some have been to see it about 500 times. It's sometimes underestimated but I think it's incredible. It's these fans that really help to drive the show. They're online, they're sharing things and it helps word spread."

"It creates a community that people can be a part of and I just love it. I love seeing those familiar faces every week. If you're in a show that doesn't have that I think you should be worried."

"I've been lucky to be part of some high profile shows and the ones that really last are the ones that have the die-hard fans. I think they go hand in hand. I'm really glad that Jersey Boys has got them because it just shows how good it is."

People will come back two or three times a week or 500 times and it shows they're not getting bored. Also, it's really nice that as a new starter I got the stamp of approval from the fans and they welcomed me with open arms. They were really enthusiastic about my interpretation of the role. A big shout out to the fans because we wouldn't be here without them."

● JERSEY Boys is playing at the Piccadilly Theatre and is on a nationwide tour.



● GARY Watson is currently playing Nick Massi in Jersey Boys at the Piccadilly Theatre

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TALK OF THE TOWN ★ *The entertainment scene across London*

Searingly honest performance

by Nicky Sweetland

IMADE another stop on my tour of some of London's more absorbing fringe venues this week. The Old Red Lion Theatre in Islington is another intimate little place, situated above a vibrant and yet traditional pub. The 600-year-old establishment was originally owned by the Knights Hospitaller and once held strategic importance as the gateway to the City of London.

The offering, *The Verb To Love*, is a new musical by Andy Collyer and is a one-man, single act show following a teacher through a relationship from its beginnings to a painful conclusion.

The show had a slightly unusual opening, with company member Gareth Bretherton sleeping on the grassy staging area before climbing up to his



MARTIN Neely in *The Verb to Love*

The Verb To Love Old Red Lion Theatre

posy garnished piano. Bretherton provided the accompaniment to the piece and occasionally showed his own singing prowess in some lovely duets with leading man Martin Neely.

Neely plays Simon, the teacher who falls head over heels in love with student Ben, occasionally played by Bretherton, in what is essentially a group of sung monologues about the couple's shared experiences. The score has some lovely themes and lyrically it's clever but I felt there needed to be more of a change of style over the course of the hour to give a bit more light and shade, which would have stopped the music becoming too samey.

Neely gave a guileless performance as the forlorn Simon. Truthful and thought provoking, it looked at how we all form relationships and the way we feel when they go wrong. From the practicalities, to the loneliness it competently illustrated one's feelings of helplessness when the person you love decides they need to move on. Neely's performance was exceptional in this role, maintaining excellent engagement with the audience throughout and providing a sensitive and yet dynamic portrayal.

In an old venue like this you do expect a slightly flea-bitten interior, and that's what you get here. There was an acrid stench of adhesive in the airless auditorium and had the seats not been so uncomfortable, the extreme heat of the room would probably have sent me to sleep.

This aside, there is an old world charm to the place and this new musical is worth a watch.

First West End bake-off

ST Anne's churchyard on Wardour Street, Soho, will play host to the inaugural West End Bake off on Saturday, May 23rd.

The event is in aid of the charity Acting For Others and features stalls run by some of the biggest West End shows.

The casts of some of theatreland's most famous productions will be selling cakes, bakes, limited signed posters and memorabilia at this one-off event.

The occasion will be opened by the Mayor's Street Party Champion, Barbara Windsor MBE, who is a well-known supporter of the charity which offers financial assistance and support to those from the entertainment profession who have fallen on hard times.

The event is the brainchild of musical director Ben Stock and promising actress and baker Sophie Sims and they hope it will become an annual event on the Soho calendar.

"We hope to create a really nice atmosphere to welcome everyone in to buy cakes and bakes from their favourite shows as well as meeting members of the cast," said Sophie.

"The idea is that each show who has signed up will hold a stall and bring a selection of cakes and



ACTRESS and baker Sophie Sims

bakes. We have a guest judge, Barbara Windsor who will pronounce a winner who will be crowned star baker and win our first West End Bake Off trophy.

"We have new shows signing up each week since we started. So far



BARBARA Windsor

we have confirmed *Les Misérables*, *War Horse*, *Memphis*, *The Railway Children*, *Billy Elliot*, *Wicked*, *The Mousetrap*, *Mamma Mia* and *Charlie and The Chocolate Factory*. We're also extremely lucky to have a very generous donation from the Mackintosh Foundation and huge support from Official London Theatre.

"Of course, at the heart of it all and the sole reason for us doing this, is the fabulous charity, Acting For Others. Many performers don't know there is support out there for them when they are suffering from injuries, illnesses or caring for a child with special needs which may deem them unable to work or financially support themselves. This is where our event steps in. We want to put the charity in the spotlight and really give it a chance to be beneficial to those in need."

This promises to be a great event, with stars and cakes both musical theatre and baking fans which should raise money for a good cause.

Details can be found at Twitter: @westendbakeoff or www.facebook.com/westendbakeoff



The Royal College of Music presents Fulham Palace at Night May 15th 2015

For Museums at Night 2015 Fulham Palace are working with The Royal College of Music to put on a special site-specific evening of cultural entertainment. The talented musicians will take visitors back in time with vignette performances in the Palace's unique and beautiful settings.

The programme will feature a range of musical genres and some historical instruments. The performances will highlight some of Palace's most intriguing stories with atmospheric pieces from the Tudor, Georgian, and Victorian eras.

Art Book Fair

May 22nd to May 24th 2015

Book fair with the opportunity to buy important out-of-print and new publications on art, photography, fashion, counterculture and design. at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, Nash House, The Mall, London.

Beating Retreat: Waterloo Remembered at Horse Guards Parade

June 10th and 11th 2015

Dating back to the 1690s, this ceremonial musical event is a pageant of precision drill, horses, cannons and fireworks set to music. The event brings together The Massed Bands, Drums, Pipes and Corps of Drums of the Household Division with The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery and visiting military bands from around the world. For 2015, the Bands of the Troupes de Marine and the Legion Etrangere (French Foreign Legion) participate in the First World War and D-Day

Art Antiques London

June 12th – 18th 2015

Albert Hall Memorial West Lawn, Kensington Gardens, SW7 (opposite the Royal Albert Hall) Website: www.haughton.com Set in the beautiful parkland of Kensington Gardens, the Fair's Pavilion is positioned next to the Albert Memorial and opposite the Royal College of Art and The Royal Albert Hall; it is the first fair to take place on the historic site of the Great Exhibition of 1851.

Olympia International

Art & Antiques Fair

18th – 28th June 2015

Olympia National, Olympia London, Hammersmith Road, W14. Website: www.olympia-art-antiques.com

Over 160 of the world's leading antiques spe-

cialist dealers will be present at the Olympia International Art & Antiques Fair, which is now in its 43rd year. With pieces ranging from £100 to £1 million, the Fair offers the most diverse variety of high quality, vetted art, antiques and collectors' pieces than any other event in London

Lunchtime Lectures

June 25th 2015

National Army Museum Lunchtime Lectures: The Glorious Revolution. Free luntime talk by Dr Ted Vallance. Also on July 23rd - The Women of Waterloo by Catriona Kennedy.

Andre Rieu's 2015 Maastricht Concert at Vue Fulham Broadway

July 17th - 23rd

The king of waltz performs in his home town joined by his famous Johann Strauss Orchestra.

Buckingham Palace summer opening

August 1st to September 27th 2015

Visit Buckingham Palace, the official London residence of the Queen, this summer. Buckingham Palace is one of the world's few remaining working royal palaces - don't miss the chance to see it.

Explore the lavishly furnished State Rooms, containing some of the greatest treasures from the Royal Collection. Highlights include: Paintings by Rembrandt, Rubens, Vermeer, Poussin, Canaletto and Claude Sculpture by Canova and Chantrey Exquisite examples of Sèvres porcelain Some of the finest English and French furniture in the world

Rooftop Cinema

Until September 30th 2015

Fancy catching a film without having to sit in a stuffy cinema? Until the end of September, Rooftop Film Club is offering a season of classic, cult and recent releases on top of two of London's finest rooftops: the Queen of Hoxton bar, club and art collective in Shoreditch and former Victorian factory the Bussey Building in Peckham.

On Peckham Common, cineastes can sample delicious food, sup cold drinks and watch fabulous movies as the stars come out to shine - all augmented by a huge screen, high-quality wireless headphones and comfy seats. Last summer saw more than 200 sold-out screenings, so book soon!

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TALK OF THE TOWN ★ *The entertainment scene across London*

A love letter to London

CITY Stories at St James' Studio is a must see for all Londoners.

From the award-winning writer James Philips, City Stories is a show intrinsically linked to the capital, comprising of six interwoven stories. It's a new type of cabaret drama taking a residency at this venue. Each story is set in contemporary London, but given a magical dream like feel on a simple set with live music written and performed by acclaimed singer songwriter Rosabella Gregory.

by Nicky Sweetland

Writer James Philips said: "The audience are taken on a journey around London, visiting St Pancras, Highgate, Trafalgar Square, the National Gallery, Chelsea and one story is set in St Pauls. They're all love stories really, but City Stories itself is a love letter to London."

Philips has also written McQueen, a highly anticipated play based on world famous couture designer Alexander McQueen which opened this

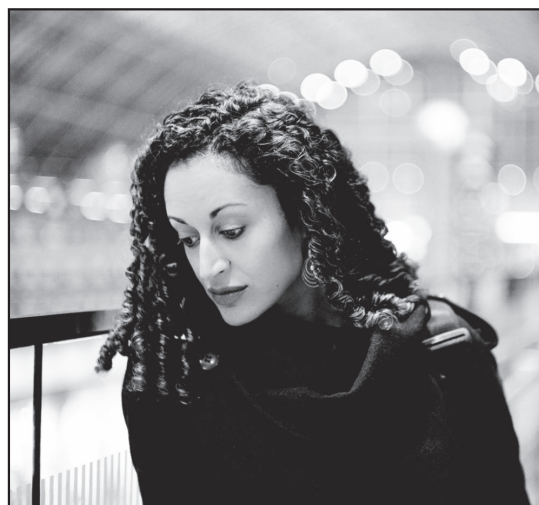
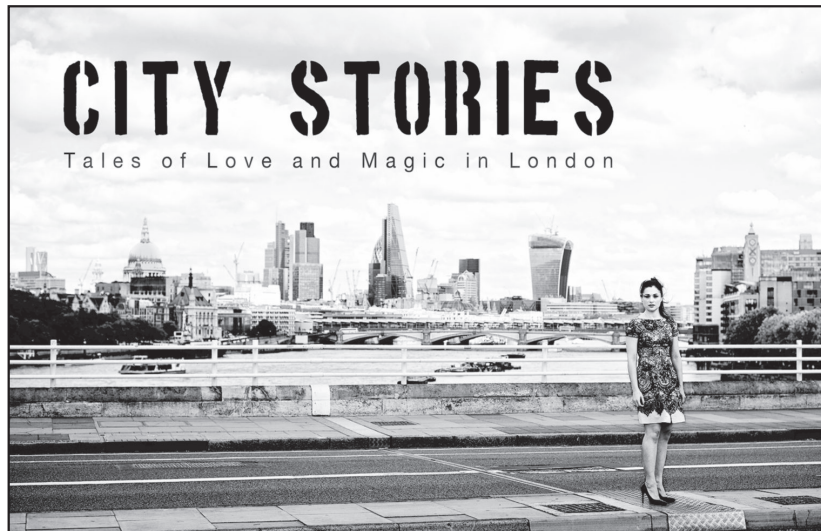
week at The St James' Theatre.

Philips explained: "From June 2nd-7th City Stories will be playing in St James Studio whilst McQueen is playing in St James Theatre Main House. So, St James have very kindly given me their entire building!"

The City Stories company currently includes, big name stars such as Spandau Ballet's Gary Kemp and star of the Andrew Lloyd Webber Musical Steven Ward, Alexander Hanson. Hanson has had a glittering career both in the West End and on TV. I first saw him perform alongside the BBC's How Do You Solve a Problem like Maria? winner Connie Fisher and opera star Lesley Garret in the West End revival of The Sound Of Music.

Speaking of how he got involved with this new project Hanson said: "I went to see one of these shows at the St James' Studio, and I was utterly beguiled by it. It's got a magical realism. The St James' Studio has got this lovely vibe. It's sort of cabaretish. You can kick back with the beautiful Rosabella Gregory behind the grand piano who's the most sensational song writer. She just captures something with her songwriting. It takes me back to when I first came to London. The Thames, the King's Road, lots of girls and music, just London."

"It starts at St Pancras which, because I'm a Nottingham boy, is



where we would hit when we came down to London so it's iconic for me. You've got these beautiful different monologues about London with different music underneath and songs sung by beautiful Rosie and it's just magical and great way to spend an evening.

Philips added.

"The stories have just been published by Methuen, and we have made an album of Rosabella Gregory's music from the show. We gained a Residency at St James Studio, and so will be playing these special June shows to mark McQueen being performed in the Main House."

City Stories opens on the 2nd June. All of the details about the show can be found at www.citystories.co.uk



Queen of the stage can also sing cabaret

WITH the London Festival of Cabaret in full swing, I embarked on a trip to see a bit more of this very urban genre, having seen the fabulous Frances Ruffelle only a few weeks earlier at the Crazy Coq.

This time I decided I'd see if queen of the West End Kerry Ellis was as good at cabaret as she is at playing some of the biggest and most sought after roles in the theatreland.

Ellis has just finished a sold out run in Cats at the London Palladium and, with a new single recently released her with friend and mentor Queen legend Brian May, is again earning her crown and riding high in the West End.

The evening's cabaret offering was at the Delfont Rooms, an intimate venue deep in the bowels of the beautifully refurbished Prince of Wales Theatre in Leicester Square.

With a large fan base gathered over the years from performing in cult shows like We Will Rock You and Les Miserables, the relatively small lounge soon filled and was awash with a buzz of anticipation.

Taking to the stage Ellis performed some of the biggest hits of her career together with well known standards from the musical theatre

and pop music world. The acoustic melodies which had been wonderfully arranged by musical director and Craig Adams had a welcome freshness and simplicity to their sound.

Ellis holds a wonderful rapport with her audience, as if they were just out for a drink with a friend who happens to be able to sing. Confident, and yet with a slight vulnerability, she sings with a grace and beauty akin to the stars of yesteryear, but also always maintaining a personal connection with her followers.

The musical highlights were a medley of numbers from Lloyd Webber's "Tell Me on a Sunday", the gorgeous "Feed the Birds" from Disney's Mary Poppins, and the rousing Queen anthem "Somebody to Love".

There was also a bit of fun audience participation including a creditable performance from one of the musical director's students, who stepped up to the stage with Ellis to perform a romantic duet from Wicked.

This was a wonderful hour of entertainment, perfect for fans but also a showcase for anyone who wanted to hear one of the country's leading singing talents.

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LONDON WEEKLY NEWS

sport

R's face huge rebuilding job

RELEGATED with a whimper at Manchester City, where they were lucky to escape with only a 6-0 Premier League drubbing on Sunday, QPR now face the most difficult summer in their chequered history.

Previous demotions from the top flight have never been as costly as this one promises to be for the west London club bracing itself for a hefty fine from the Football League for breaching Financial Fair Play rules the last time they were in the Championship. Some fear the fine could exceed £50m.

Even allowing for the upsurge in revenue from the latest £5bn-plus TV rights deal, the bean counters at Loftus Road will need to perform a tricky financial balancing act in the months and years ahead.

The immediate reaction will be to sell their best players, starting with leading scorer Charlie Austin, to the highest bidders as chairman Tony Fernandes implements a new and far reaching restructuring of a club that has wasted millions on players who haven't come up to the required standard in terms of ability or attitude.

In a summer that promises massive upheaval, QPR will seek to offload their highest earners, including Rio Ferdinand, but moving them all off the wage bill won't be plain sailing if, as often

happens, the players concerned decide to sit tight and see out their ludicrously lavish contracts.

Since Air Asia owner Fernandes and his colleagues took over the club in the summer of 2011 he has seen it relegated twice while the wage bill has spiralled under successive managers Mark Hughes and Harry Redknapp whose expensive signings have, with few exceptions, not come up to scratch.

Rebounded

This short-term transfer policy has rebounded badly on QPR, who must find ways to attract hungry, young players who want to play their part in rebuilding the club, while at the same time develop their own academy products capable of progressing to the first team. The scouting set-up may also need an overhaul.

This is the scale of the task facing director of football Les Ferdinand and the manager – whoever he may be.

Chris Ramsey, appointed after the transfer window closed in January and following Redknapp's

LOFTUS ROAD RANGERS REVIEW

With Tony McDonald



GOING DOWN: Charlie Austin will need to be sold
Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South

abrupt resignation when no more funds were forthcoming from the board, cannot be blamed for R's demise this season. He inherited a side too heavily reliant on Austin's goals, already mired in trouble near the bottom of the table and which had failed to win a single away game.

In truth, the team that was promoted this time last year, courtesy of Bobby Zamora's late play-off final winner – 22 points behind champions Leicester City and 13 behind Burnley – was never going to be good enough to retain its top flight status. And

Redknapp knew it.

In February, Ramsey was promoted from his role as academy manager and asked to do his best as interim first team boss with the odds stacked heavily against him. If Rangers had somehow managed to beat the drop, he would almost certainly have been offered a new contract.

Even after relegation was confirmed, Fernandes and Ferdinand may still have considered the 53-year-old Ramsey as the club's best option to manage the rebuilding process in the Championship next season.

FOOTBALL FIXTURES

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CHELSEA U21 v West Ham United U21, 7.05.
Saturday, May 16
Aston Villa U18 v CHELSEA U18, 12.00.
QPR v Newcastle United, 3.00.
Monday, May 18
West Bromwich Albion v CHELSEA, 8.00.

But are they both still convinced of his ability to organise and motivate his players after Sunday's pathetic shambles in Manchester, where R's simply rolled over? In fairness to Ramsey, it can't be an easy job to motivate players paid thousands of pounds a week more than him who rarely bear any responsibility for their failures.

The huge gulf that exists between Man City and QPR, who have sunk to the bottom of the table with two games remaining, was all too evident amid the carnage that unfolded at The Etihad.

Only the heroics of Richard Green prevented an avalanche. The keeper – along with 17-goal Austin – has done more than any QPR player to prolong R's relegation hopes but he will almost certainly be on his way out of Loftus Road.

After the game that condemned QPR, Ramsey said: "The players are in a really solemn mood. They know they haven't done themselves justice. We feel sorry for the fans that have travelled all the way here."

"The performance was our worst for a long time. We've had spells where we've been poor but not for the majority of the game."

"We came here with a lot of hope but on the day we didn't turn up. "The players have shown a lot of fight and determination to stay in the league but you don't end up where you are by fluke."

Yet within just seconds of apologising to fans for the team's embarrassingly woeful capitulation, Ramsey declared: "I want to stay and manage QPR."

SURREY supporters didn't have to wait long to witness Kevin Pietersen's first century on his recent return to the county.

As LWN Sport went to press on Monday, Pietersen – in his third comeback match for Surrey – had just moved to 101 not out – including two sixes and 12 fours – off 154 balls in 178 minutes at The Kia Oval, where the home side looked set to go past Leicestershire's first innings score of 292 all out.

It is KP's first Championship ton since June 2013 and his 50th first-class hundred.

He celebrated the landmark with a leap in the air and a fist-pump.

SURREY CCC ROUND-UP



HE'S BACK: Kevin Pietersen hit his first ton of 2015

Surrey open their NatWest T20 Blast account against Glamorgan under The Oval lights on Friday night, followed the next afternoon (1.00pm) with a

visit to Chelmsford to face Essex in the same competition.

They return to LV Championship action at Northampton next Monday.



MIDDLESEX CCC ROUND-UP

SEAMER James Harris led Middlesex to a 187-run LV Championship victory over Durham with career-best figures of 9-34 at Lord's.

He was denied the honour of becoming only the sixth player in Middlesex history to take all 10 wickets by Steven Finn, who claimed the eighth dismissal before Harris, 24, resumed to

clean up the tail.

Durham's total of 71 was the second lowest in their first-class history.

After Middlesex mustered just 89 in their second innings, leaving Durham chasing 259 to win, they needed Harris to shine and the Welshman responded with a brilliant spell in which he took five wickets for just nine runs in the first half-hour.

The Swansea-born bowler took just 12 Championship wickets in seven matches last season.

Harris said: "It has been a long time coming but I'm really happy. I've felt all season I have been bowling nicely and there was still something to click."

After their Championship match against Sussex at Hove this week, Middlesex begin their NatWest T20 Blast campaign against Gloucestershire at Bristol on Friday (5.30pm), before resuming league duty from Sunday against Hampshire at Southampton.



● RUGBY UNION

HAMMERSMITH and Fulham put 62 points on Millfield Old Boys to successfully defend the Middlesex Club 7s Cup.

Starring roles from captain Tony Bryant and Jamie Lo saw Hammers glide through the pool stages with ease, beating league rivals Staines along the way.

Hammers faced London Scottish Academy in the semi-finals and took them apart before facing Millfield Old Boys in the final.

H & F starved the opposition of possession thanks to pinpoint restarts from veteran Jack Sargent, who also managed to scamper over the line in the first half alongside prolific scorers Bryant, Lo and Joel Rabbidge.

The free-flowing scoring continued into the second half, with Hammers running out 62-5 victors for the second year in a row.

The win qualifies the club for the



Top: Tony Bryant, James Smart and coach Dave Mannion after H & F retained the Middlesex 7s. **Above:** Julien Draper receives the Merit Table Plate trophy on behalf of Hammers' second team

inaugural Pan-London Regional 7s at Allianz Park in August.

Meanwhile, Hammers' seconds picked up the Merit Table Plate trophy, with Will North claiming the crucial try against Ruislip IIs in a 32-17 win.

The club also bid farewell to former club captain Tom Morris.

Focus on Craven Cottage

By TONY McDONALD

Ex-Whites charity game

TICKETS are now on sale for a charity football fixture between a Fulham All-Star side and the Celebrity All-Stars, to be played at Craven Cottage on **Saturday, May 23 (1.00pm).**

Confirmed for the Fulham squad this year

are a host of former favourites. Captained on the day by Sean Davis, the ex-Whites also include John Pantsil, Barry Hayles, Rufus Brevett, Maik Taylor, Abdes Ouaddou, Paul Peschisolido and Andrejs Stolcers.

And joining them once more is avid Fulham fan Felix White from indie rock band The Maccabees.

This year will see Fulham All-Stars face a new challenge by way of a team of celebrities managed by Game of Thrones actor Sean Bean, with the likes of former world middleweight boxing champion Darren Barker, Olympic gold medalist rower Mark Hunter, music artist Tinchy Stryder, former footballer Jason Euell, and Soccer AM's Franky

Fryer and Tubes all included in their squad.

Only the Riverside Stand will be open. Tickets bought in advance cost £12 for adults and £5 for under-16s, although the adult price increases to £15 on match day. You can purchase tickets online at www.fulhamfc.com, by phoning 0843 208 123 or in person from the ticket office.

■ FULHAM Under-18s finished their season in style by hammering Arsenal 5-1 at Motspur Park on Saturday.

The young Whites went behind in the 36th minute and then missed two penalties.

But they still won convincingly thanks to goals from Ravin, Pearce, Redford and De la Torre and an own-goal.

SPORT

Thursday, May 14th, 2015

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Young ones can shine

JOSE Mourinho is willing to invest his time and energy in giving youth a chance and the first fruits of that could come on Monday evening when the Premier League champions take on West Bromwich Albion at The Hawthorns.

Having blooded 19-year-old Rubén Loftus-Cheek during the dour 1-1 draw against Liverpool on Sunday, Mourinho intends to see just what some of the other players who have won the UEFA Youth Champions League in April and retained the FA Youth Cup two weeks ago are about.

Mourinho is adamant that Loftus-Cheek and others will get a chance to see if they can perform at the top level.

"He did well," Mourinho said of Loftus-Cheek's solid midfield performance against Liverpool.

"It was better for him to play 60 minutes than to stay

● By LWN reporter **Paul Lagan**
sport@londonweeklynews.co.uk

on until the end.

"It was a fantastic experience for him – to feel the intensity and speed of the game and the way he has to think and compete."

Mourinho has high hopes for him and some of the other kids who have dominated youth football in England and Europe this season.

No doubt

"Loftus-Cheek is going to be a Chelsea player," he said. "That is not a doubt. I also believe others can too. It's down to good work at academy level."

"In the last game, at home against Sunderland, I will play the players who have played the most minutes this season. They were the base of the team that won the title."

"But against West Brom on Monday night, as they are safe from relegation and no other team is affected (by the result), I will play Loftus-Cheek, Nathan Ake and also Izzy Brown who came to us from WBA. That will be special for them, they deserve it. But I can't give a special day to everyone."

Of course, the other pressure influencing his decision is a growing desire from Roman Abramovich to see youth given its chance.

He has invested many millions of pounds during his tenure as owner of Chelsea and built a state-of-the-art complex at the Cobham training ground to fund the next generation of super players.

The need to justify that investment means that Blues' young players have to be shown a clear pathway to the first team.

As it stands Chelsea has a whole squad of youngsters out on loan, in England and abroad. These are players who are older than the likes of Loftus-Cheek and Brown but don't seem to be in a



ALL SMILES: Jose Mourinho looking relaxed now that the title has been secured Pic: Rob Newell/Digital South



This week at STAMFORD BRIDGE

position to challenge for a first team squad place.

Joe Edwards, Chelsea's under-18s manager who steered his young charges to the FA Youth Cup victory over Manchester City, also believes he has future Chelsea first team players under his charge.

When asked if he was confident that one or two of the recent medal winners would make it into Chelsea's senior side, his response was sharp and concise: "Yeah, I am confident."

But one can't get away from the fact that despite Chelsea's brilliant record in the FA Youth Cup, John Terry was last one to really emerge through the youth ranks and become a senior regular. So how confident was Edwards that there is a commitment to get these players through to the first X1?

"I am confident," he reiterates. "This under-18 group is special. We have had consecutive FA Youth Cup wins and that comes on the back of our European success a couple of weeks ago. And the boys are still young."

"I don't think that they should be able to walk into a club like Chelsea at 17 but you have to be a winner to come into a team like this. All you can do is keep knocking on the manager's door and letting him know that you have that in you as well."

Would he expect prospects such as Dominic Solanke and Izzy Brown to find themselves involved with the first team more next season?

"I think it's different for each individual, to be honest," he said.

"You can't talk of them as a group. You see the likes of Lewis Baker, who has won this competition and gone out on loan, and Rubén Loftus-Cheek, who is close to the first team but has not gone out on loan, so it's different depending on what players need and what the manager wants. You take it one step at a time."

Mourinho looked as tired as his players as he tried to explain away the lacklustre display against Liverpool.

"After being champions and having a couple of days off, I think it was a normal and expected performance. The intensity was down," he admitted.

"We have played to our limits trying to reach the title as soon as possible, so I knew that the Liverpool game would be difficult for some players."

"People like John Obi Mikel, Rubén Loftus-Cheek, Filipe Luis and Loic Remy have not played a lot, so it was difficult for them to play 90 minutes at this level."

"But then the likes of Cesc Fabregas, Eden Hazard and Willian have played too much. But we did what we had to do. We were the best team in the first half and they were better in the second, so it was a fair result."

Mourinho admitted that Petr Cech would have played but for injury and has not yet ruled out the

possibility of the Czech keeper remaining at Chelsea as No.2 to Thibaut Courtois.

"Cech had a small injury," he said. "but I think he will be ready to play against West Brom."

"He knew he was meant to play against Liverpool."

Now he will play against WBA, because he deserves to play, not to say goodbye.

"I think he will stay with us."

It was unusual to see Chelsea fans applaud Liverpool's long-serving talisman Steven Gerrard off the field on his final appearance at the Bridge, although Mourinho was happy to see this widespread show of respect for the player he tried to bring to SW6 a decade ago.

"I was pleased," he said. "The negative song they sing about him only shows respect for him – like a song for a dear animal. The applause was special and Steve gets that all the time at Anfield. But for him to receive it in an away stadium was fantastic. Every club respects him a lot."

Greater priority

With the Premier League title already won, Mourinho can now look forward to next season with new acquisitions. But first of all he has a greater priority.

"The first thing is to keep my players and I think we will do that. Last year I was keen to see some people leave and our club raise funds to buy others. But this season I am happy with what my squad gave me. I need to keep them and try to get the best out of them."

"People like Diego Costa. He is a fabulous player but has never had a pre-season break. He was always at a tournament and never had rest. Now that he is injured, he is not going to the Copa America."

"Also, I have a feeling that Oscar will have the same evolution next season as Eden Hazard has had this year. So I am happy with them. I have to respect the players who gave us the title."

With Chelsea's transfer business restricted by Financial Fair Play rules, last season they helped to finance the signing of Luis, Fabregas and Costa by the sale of David Luiz and Romelu Lukaku.

Although Chelsea won't be selling any players this summer for as much as the £50m PSG paid for Luiz a year ago, they are likely to offload Cech, Mikel and Luis. That will allow the manager to step up his desire to bring in 25-year-old left-back Aaron Cresswell from West Ham and Spanish international midfielder Koke, 23, from Atletico Madrid.

■ **CHELSEA Under-21s closed the gap on league leaders Manchester United to three points, with a game in hand, as they came from behind to beat second-placed Liverpool 4-3.**

A hat-trick from Dominic Solanke and a brilliant strike from Alex Kiwomya proved the difference.

Adi Viveash's side will host West Ham at Stamford Bridge on Friday night and travel to Sunderland and Norwich in their final three league games.



Ruben Loftus-Cheek started his first Premier League game against Liverpool.